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Facing the Consequences: Identifying the Limitations of How We Categorize People in Research and Policy

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Abstract

Social policy researchers and policy rules and regulation writers have not taken advantage of advances in assessing ways in which social representations of ideas about people can convey alternative explanations of social life. During the past decade a growing number of scholars have considered how representational practices and the representations that are outcomes of such practices have value. Neglecting to consider representational practices has consequences including failure to mobilize and sustain alternative ideologies that reject narrow perspectives on families and communities. As evidenced by recent OMB rulings on census categories, the dominant sense of meaning of population—and hence family and community—is quite similar to the 17th century sense of people as objects of a particular category in a place from which samples can be taken for statistical measurement. However, the contrastive analysis presented in this paper points out how sustained attention to consequences of use of sets of information categories collected to enumerate population to inform social policy can still materialize. In the wake of federal welfare reform, policy makers are particularly interested in questions of benefit relative to social service delivery and community revitalization. The presentation includes lessons learned from several dozen family, youth, school and community research projects.

Introduction

During the past few years, the population categories of race, ethnicity, gender, have been scrutinized by legal and political institutions, as well as social science disciplines and associations (e.g. Begley, 1995; Hollins, King & Hayman, 1994; Hill & Greenhaugh, 1997; Hughey, 1998; Hutchinson & Smith, 1996; Schlosberg 1998). Acting on recommendations presented by Members of the Presidential Advisory Board on Race known as the President's Council for One America, the fiscal 2000 budget included a proposal to create new types of social science population data that will provide ways to measure racial bias in everyday life and educate the public about population categories such as racial and ethnic groups (Ross, 1999; Watson, 1998). At the same time, Federal Courts are reexamining the nature and legitimacy of principles of public justification of decades old consent degrees that lead to dividing public school populations into different groups (Siskind, 1994). In academic arenas, the goal of formulating a knowledge base for teaching about diverse populations has been judged inadequate on several counts. "A major element in the confusion and conflict surrounding the field of 'ethnic phenomena' has been the failure to find any measure of agreement about what the central concepts of ethnicity signify or how they should be used" (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996, p. 15). Assessment of the analytical contributions of idioms of population such as pluralism and multiculturalism has also been negative. One set of negative judgments is that continued concern with technical matters of demography fail to advance understandings of renewed ethnic polarizations and the conditions in which numerous ethnic, religious or cultural groups coexist within a society, (e.g. Greenhalgh, 1995, Higham, 1998; McNicoll, 1994, Schlosberg, 1998, Webster, 1997).

Representatives of multiple social science disciplines argue the need for policy scientists to remake population analysis by incorporating historical contingency and societal specificity in narrative modes of explanation. Schlosberg (1998) argues that such approaches provide "an acknowledgment of multiplicity—an openness to ambiguity and the differences its spawns" (p. 603). Restating McNicoll's (1992) plea for a demography for a more turbulent world, Greenhalgh (1995) calls for policy researchers to direct audiences' attention to studies that attempt multilevel analysis to provide explanations that embrace "not only the social and economic, but also the political and cultural aspects of demographic change" (p. 49). Greenhalgh (1995) raises the question, How can the agenda of studying population as a phenomena of interest across social science disciplines be contextualized in the social and economic terms of demography and in political and cultural terms as well?

Overview

In this article, we provide examples of current work in social science disciplines which addresses the policy research argument that understanding the impact of changes in human numbers on social and

cultural life requires moving beyond current standards of empirical categories. For example, the United Nations suggests enumeration of the structure of the world's populations and their patterns of change involves collecting information on at least 4 sets of empirical facts: (1) Demographic, including sex, age, marital status, birthplace, place of usual residence, relationship to head of household, number of children; (2) Economic or type of activity, occupation; (3) Social and Political, including language, ethnic or religious affiliation; (4) Educational including literacy or level of education, school attendance (cf. "census" Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 1999).

The meaning of theses sets of words and ideas about people are taken for granted and used as a referent in social policy, courts and other legal institutions to link the individual with society. Yet, few researchers make clear how their categorization and measurement of individuals along social identity and ethnic lines is linked to a conceptual foundation or theoretical base. "While conceptually researchers are pointing to the dynamics and fluid nature of ethnicity, empirically they are measuring ethnicity [and social identity] as a static entity" (Leets, Giles & Clement, 1996, p. 11).

The common tendency has been to use measurement categories such as suggested by the United Nations to project that the world will include 6 billion people in the 21st century. Such projections are predicated without examination of just what it is about standards categories of human numbers that will impact social life (Kertzer, 1995). Consequently, policy researchers point to a need for exploring how different categories of people are linked to different communicative practices (Wallat & Piazza, 1991; 1997). One argument is that a focus on "plurality of meanings" and "variable functions of communication" could bring attention to both internal and external influences on the "construction of the subjectivity that group membership and citizenship built upon" (Schlosberg, 1998, p.160). Practices of communication as a key issue in policy research are proposed as a strategy to: (a) affirm the theoretical richness of available notions of pluralism such as "the irreducible plurality of the social realm" (cf. Schlosberg, 1998, p. 586), and (b) provide "an acknowledgment of multiplicity - an openness to ambiguity and the differences it spawns" (cf. Schlosberg, 1998, p. 603).

Reconsidering the need within social science to expand its discursive practices to address the consequences of the projected 21st century number of 6 billion people on economy, government and society is also a current focus of the American Anthropological Association (Hill & Greenhalgh, 1998). Marking 1998 as the bicentennial of the publication of "Essay on the Principle of Population as it Affects the Future Improvement of Society," association members have reminded social scientists that the empirical observations on the realities of poverty reported by Thomas Malthus in 1798 have defied attempts to identify factors that increase the likelihood that institutional adaptation will occur fast enough to deal with current and prospective populations (Bean, 1990, p. 27).

The American Anthropology Association Annual Program Meeting Chair Susan Greenhalgh suggested that population questions,

including, Who is counting whom? Why is counting taking place? and, How are the variables constructed?, can be reformulated and addressed as areas of inquiry. Examples of such areas for examination include: (a) Population categories as pattern, that is behavior conceptualized as social organization and culture change, (b) Population categories as discourse, that is how notions of discourse shape construction of discursive categories, (c) Population categories as politics, that is attention to the negotiations and contestations surrounding population as an issue or problem.

Commentaries by members of the association on the proposed questions provide further suggestions on how they might be developed as a framework for analysis of social science literature. Charles Briggs (1998), for example, suggests focusing on the extent to which public discourse terms can be taken in a marked sense, as issues of standard population measurement versus representations of populations as contested categories of cultural, political and economic power. Such contrastive analysis could provide examples of the extensive variety of ways of seeing and interpreting the study of humankind.

The work reported in this article is organized to address these questions, areas of inquiry, and framework for analysis. For our purpose a contrast between population as a marked term and representations of population is as follows: the marked sense of population is what can be learned about a social - political construct enacted in legislation as social control indicators that are countable, manageable and amenable to manipulation in policy prescription; representations in observational studies include what has been learned from accounts of the consequences of social control statistics of populations such as ethnicity on understanding individuals' development of social identity. We propose that policy analysis can take advantage of how advances in assessing social representations of people convey alternative explanations of social life. We point to examples of recent ethnographies that illustrate consequences of use of prevailing categories of the substance of people embedded in social policy. In the wake of federal welfare reform, policy makers are particularly interested in questions of benefit relative to family and community revitalization and possible misdirection of funding contingencies. For example, The *Congressional Record* provides hundreds of references for the terms "youth" and "community services" in policy debates and appropriation hearings (*http://thomas.loc.gov*). Our presentation includes findings from studies of youth organization projects supported through such policy initiatives. Overall the findings from studies of youth organization and dominant heath and education institutions suggest that the formulation of appropriation rules and regulations for American family adolescents members may be misdirected by standard categories of people. Ethnographers of schools and communities illustrate how young people represented in policy as populations at risk are resisting pejorative values embedded in such appropriation categories. Rather they portray their styles of social and individual identity in ways that leave ethnic and racial population categories behind (e.g. Davidson, 1995, Heath & McLaughlin, 1993, McCarthy, 1997, Miron, 1996,

Munoz, 1998). Thus a more anthropologically oriented position, including avoiding a priori assumptions about social identity or community affiliation, is indicated.

What Do We Mean by Population Categories? Who Is Counting Whom? Why Is Counting Taking Place? How Are the Variables Constructed?

During the past several decades scholars from a number of disciplines have focused on the practices used across the human sciences to shape and create objects of knowledge such as population. Researchers trace the historical development of ideologies as particular ways of "seeing" and interpreting collective identity to the 17 th century (e.g., Popkewitz, 1991, Laosa, 1984). Popkewitz highlights tensions which have accompanied the intersection of knowledge, power and historically situated practices in the following way:

> Beginning in the 17th century, there was a shift from a classical view in which [a] word was representative of the object [observed] to a world in which people [were attributed with the capacity to] reflect and be self - conscious about their historical conditions. A view of change occurred that tied progress to reason...and systematic human intervention to social institutions. The new sets of relations between knowledge and social practice inhered in a variety of social relations. Accompanying the emergent [ideology indexed as the] Enlightenment was the creation of the nation - state, where, for the first time, people were assigned a collective identity that was both anonymous and concrete. Abstract concepts of....constitutional, democratic rules produced new sets of boundaries, expectations, and possibilities of the general notion of citizen. At the same time, people could be considered in specific and detailed ways as populations that could be characterized into subgroups distinct from any sense of the whole. The concept of population made possible new technologies of control, since there was greater possibility for the supervision, observation, and administration of the individual. (p. 32).... *People* came to be defined as populations that could be ordered through the political arithmetic of the state, which the French called *statistique*. State administrators spoke of social welfare in terms of biological issues such as reproduction, disease, and education (individual development, growth, and evolution). Human needs were seen as instrumental and empirical in relation to the functioning of the state. (p. 38)

Laosa (1984) cited policies established over the past 400 years in which children, youth and families were defined by a variety of ancestry ties, codified as people in treaties and laws, and denied opportunities to deal with their social and economic subordination (cf.

p. 7). As evidenced by recent OMB rulings on census categories, the dominant sense of meaning of population—and hence family and community—is quite similar to the 17th century sociologists' sense of "population" as objects of a particular category in a place from which samples can be taken for statistical measurement. In contrast to the 100 plus possible social identity representations identified in the 1980 *Harvard Encyclopedia of American ethnic groups* (Thernstrom, 1980) and the 1998 *Atlas of American Diversity* (Shinagawa & Jang, 1998), the year 2000 census information will delimit the meaning of population to five minimum categories for data on race and two categories for data on ethnicity (i.e., American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Hispanic or Latino).

In 1995, Ruth McKay prophesied delimitation of social identity would continue to occur as standards for the classification of federal data on population because of conceptual and affect problems that occurred in interviews that were conducted to try new versions of race and ethnicity questions. "Many respondents were uncomfortable answering any question about race, because they feared the questionnaire was really about racism, and...a covert attempt to learn if they were really racist" (McKay & del la Puente, 1995, p. 4). Interview questions were based upon a technical frame of reference for collection of data needed to monitor policy prescriptions rather than local knowledge (cf. Pike, 1954). Questions asked included, "Please tell me what you think is the most important characteristic that defines race [and] Do you think there is any difference between race, ethnicity, and ancestry?.... Several respondents thought the [interviewer] was asking about the ethical character of races. One [person] thought the word 'characteristic' meant that we were asking about [their]character" (McKay & del la Puente, 1995, p.4). Hence, by law and policy U.S. population means the marked standards designed by the Office of Management and Budget for collecting data on the race and ethnicity of broad population groups in this country, "and are not anthropologically or scientifically based" (Office of Management and Budget, 1997).

Examination of Congressional bills during 1997-1998 (*http://thomas.loc.gov*) also suggests that population issues will continue to be legislatively framed as population management, family planning, and ancestry and social - economic identity. We question whether the consequence of continued use of a technical base for policy evaluation continues use of stereotypes. To counter myths or broad social meanings that shape experience and evaluation of attributes requires finding ways to "pay attention to the particulars, the specifics, the concrete reality, with all its blemishes and contradictions" (Lye, 1997, p. 2)

Under these circumstances, attempting to counter prevailing population ideology by further engaging in examining "practices of decoding and re-encoding, of translation and interlocution, and of rhetorical deconstruction" (Brown, 1995, p. 13) may seem foolhardy. Yet, Charles Goodwin (1994) argues that the phenomena of legal argumentation surrounding social policies be subjected to further

attention as objects of knowledge that members of the profession can contest. In his article, "Professional Vision," Goodwin illustrates how the activities of coding, highlighting, and producing and articulating ways of seeing and interpreting, can be applied to the politics of representation. He believes this may occur as the following three questions are reformulated in a new era of studies on discursive practices used across social science: (a) What are the conditions in which modes of representations are accepted in social science and humanities as objective, valid, or legitimate? (b) How are accounts of social norms made adequate to their respective purposes and audiences through discursive and political practices? (c) How can sustaining interest in rhetorical analysis of genres or texts be directed towards attention to claims, proofs, and propositions as well as to the communicative contexts in which "members of a profession hold each other accountable and context the constitution and perception of the objects that define their professional competence" (p. 606).

Richard Brown (1995) has also produced a collection of arguments by anthropologists and sociologists to persuade others to make problematic the construction and presentation of representations by focusing on the how of representation—of objectivity, of native view, of group, of culture—and so forth (p.13). The unifying perspective presented by Brown, is that an emphasis on deconstruction and rhetorical analysis may counter current pessimism and suspicion flagged in both academic and public discourses on the limits of social science (cf. Wallat & Piazza, 1999).

According to John Van Maanen (1995), however, the consequences of the introspection of written representations of culture produced by specific ethnographers since the 1960s, as well as the spread of methodological self-consciousness across the "cultural representation business" remains to be seen. What is needed is examples of how this turn towards displaying problems that social science representations face, and cracking open representational practices alters—if at all—traditional practices in educational , community, and legal arenas (cf. Van Mannen, 1995).

The following section provides a compilation of such examples.

Focus on the Extent to Which the Term Should Be Taken in its Marked Sense, As Issues of Population versus the Representations of Populations

The value of Charles Briggs' advice to develop critiques of the concept population as a contrastive analysis of marked sense of the term in legal documents such as government standards for the classification of federal data on race and ethnicity, versus representations of populations that may demystify such standards through drawing attention to particulars of family and community experiences, is beginning to emerge in studies of school populations. For example, contrastive analysis is possible due to the availability of primary sources for reviewing school population issues as they are marked in reports developed by The National Center for Educational Statistics (*http://nces.ed.gov*) through funding appropriated to this

agency and a growing number of published collections of life experience narratives.

Recent ethnographies of African American and Asian American students and their teachers, families, and communities (e.g., Fordham,1996; Lee, 1996), "pay attention to the particulars, the specifics, the concrete reality, with all its blemishes and contradictions" (Lye, 1997, p. 2). Analysis of the contributions of such studies is the researchers' ability to point out that a major consequence of population categories in educational domains is that "Whiteness remains the dominant racial ideology, not by promoting Whiteness as superior, but by promoting Whiteness as normative" (Spina & Tai, 1998, p. 36). For example, the population category "at risk youth" continues to be a term synonymous with Black, and Latino youth while Asian America students are represented as "academic superstars." The power of the dominant normative stance "does not stop at simply defining Others.... It supports the assumption that White youth are not all 'at risk' nor are they all 'academic superstars.' This position grants White youth the privilege to determine their own academic destiny" (p. 36).

Reviewers of such ethnographies of students, teachers, families and communities (e.g. Sleeter, 1992) provide a means of publicly contesting limited knowledge of concrete realities of and continued use of "prefabricated panethnicity" (Spina & Tai, 1998, p. 40) such as White, Black, Hispanic and Latino in public discourse. Educational researchers are beginning to recognize that more can be learned about "how power lies not in the making of generalizations, but in making generalizations stick" (Spina & Tai, 1998, p. 36). As Greg Urban stated in his response to the year long *Anthropology Newsletter* discussion on the known and unknown in social science, the question should not be: What is the relationship between the culture being represented in an ethnography and the world. "Rather, because culture is both in the world and about the world, the question [we should be asking participants in our studies to help us explore is] What is the relationship between culture that is out there and culture that is a representation of what [you believe] is out there?" (Urban, 1997, p. 1). Compilations of stories of youth, families and communities, representing individuals' attempts to define their personal and social identity provide new images of the concept of power through considering how persons receive, resist, contest, or transform dominant representations.

Facing the Consequences of Traditional Research on Youth Development

The General Accounting Office (GAO) has identified 131 programs administered by 16 different federal departments and other agencies that direct four billion dollars a year at communities represented as disadvantaged to support the creation of empowerment zones, comprehensive community services delivered through schools, gang prevention efforts, and programs that serve runaway or delinquent youth (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1996). A study

panel that produced the 1996 National Research Council (NRC) report "Youth Development and Neighborhood Influence: Challenges and Opportunities" (Chalk & Phillips, 1996) considered the long term gains and consequences of such federal support and concluded that investments in social strategies and community resources to promote youth development require "more attention to the types of social resources that youth seek out and create, as well as consideration of the ways in which youth gain information and control over their environment" (p.25).

The study panel also noted that such efforts require shifting from a prior problem categories such as delinquency and dropping out of school to social setting perspectives and approaches that may stimulate "interest in recognizing how adolescents themselves perceive role models of successful adult behavior, how they protect themselves during periods of danger or uncertainty, and how they seek out individuals or groups that constitute community assets capable of helping" (Chalk & Phillips, 1996, p. 7).

The NRC report noted the contribution of private foundations to research and development efforts along these lines as well as pointing out that ethnographic research has alerted social science to new possibilities for research on family and community research and policy. Their Study Panel noted that research efforts that rely on demographic and census data to assess change and development within neighborhoods and examine pathways by which ethnicity and racial heritage messages affect youth development, "have revealed many uncertainties in understanding how teenagers negotiate critical transitions...the formation of self identity, and the selection of life options" (p.3). Examples of private foundations projects were noted as examples of ways of dealing with issues in the concept of population, with formulating new policies on children, youth and families, and with crafting new lines of research inquiry highlighting the need to integrate children, youth and family development literature with research on community development and organizations. Efforts mentioned include the Casey Foundation's nationwide *Kids Count* project to identify model programs and policies (*http://www.aecf.org*), the Ford Foundation's Community Revitalization programs (*http://www.fordfoundation.org*), the Carnegie Foundation on Adolescent Development (*http://www.carnegie.org*), and foundation sponsored research grants programs.

One such foundation's research grants program provides an excellent example of the questions, areas of inquiry, and framework for analysis described in the introduction section of this paper. The Spencer Foundation (*http://www.spencer.org*) supported a five-year study of 60 different organizations described by local city officials as located in " 'the projects,' 'the barrio,' or, alternately 'communities suffering from poverty, crime, [and] severe ethnic tensions'" (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993, p. 5).

The project called "Language, socialization, and neighborhood based organizations," included exploring how members of neighborhood based organizations in the 1990s perceive their social settings, as well as tracing 20th century family and youth policy

notions (James, 1993). Fundamental differences among the crafters of youth policy and the youth from 60 different organizations who participated in this study ranged from perspectives on the role of ethnicity to types of processes and structures that set up contingent attributes of valuable life experiences. Youth avoid programs defined in terms of population policy labels and people as object statistics categories such as reduction in crime, lowered rates of school dropouts. Youth do not elect to participate in programs that label them as deviant, 'at risk,' or in some way deficient or negative. " 'What works' for inner city youth conforms to the contexts in which an activity is embedded and to the subjective realities of the youth it intends to advance, not to distant bureaucratic directives" (p. 227).

Summary

The formulation of population categories to aid in understanding the nature of people and the properties of sociocultural systems hold consequences for social science and public policy. Following scientific conventions, the many things that can be said or predicated of objects of inquiry can be subject to criticism of method and substance. Correspondingly, difficult questions have been raised for centuries about procedures for observing events, processes or phenomena glossed as the study of human nature. However, changes in the world we have lived in during the past few decades have brought a host of new, more concrete issues into the social science intellectual agenda (Greenhaugh, 1995). Concepts, categories and representations of people are being scrutinized in terms of how events, processes or phenomena are ordered and denoted.

Major consequences of the realities of funding formulas based upon statistical meanings of people that began taking hold in the 17th century are being uncovered as organizations attempt to serve youth and families. The challenge to explicate and use local knowledge in contrast to relying on a prior categories of people in the design and delivery of services is being formulated in reports of personal life experiences of health, education and social service providers and the children, youth and families who constitute the pluralistic community of these dominant social institutions. Such life experience stories explicate patterns of exclusion, as well as elicitation methods for overcoming patterns of silence about exclusion (e.g., Davidson, 1996, McCarthy, 1997, Miron, 1996, Munoz, 1995, Olsen, 1997, Pang & Cheng, 1998, Spindler & Spindler, 1994; Wallat & Steele, 1997).

As Kenneth Pike (1954) pointed out nearly a half century ago when he introduced the concepts of emic and etic knowledge, the foundation for documenting the structure of local knowledge including how individuals receive or resist dominant representations such as ethnic identity stands in sharp contrast to continuing to document categories of people marked by statisticians as a means of collecting technical descriptions of objects.

Note

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Teachers in Charter Schools and Traditional Schools: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Teachers from charter and traditional schools in Colorado were queried about their perceptions of their level of empowerment, school climate, and working conditions. Using a cluster sampling design, approximately 100 teachers from 16 charter schools and 100 teachers from seven traditional schools were surveyed by combining several well-established instruments to measure empowerment, school climate, and working conditions. Factor analyses yielded three composite variables each for the three constructs. One-way analyses of variance were used to explore these teachers' differences in perceptions. Results yielded consistent and practically significant differences in these charter and traditional school perceptions of empowerment, school climate, and working conditions. Not all of these differences, however, were consistent with expectations given the educational and legislative contexts driving Colorado's charter school movement. Implications and recommendations for future research are given.

Introduction and Background to the Study

Charter schools are one of the fastest-spreading, dynamic, and controversial educational reform movements to emerge in response to widespread demands for better public schools and more school choice. A majority of states have now passed legislation allowing parents, teachers and community members to start these more autonomous schools, which receive public funds but operate unfettered by most state and local school district regulations governing other public schools. Charter schools attract a diverse array of people who advocate reform of the current public school system for a variety of reasons. But at the heart of the charter school concept is a shared set of assumptions about how and why such schools will improve public education (Corwin & Flaherty, 1995; Garcia & Garcia, 1996; RPP International, 1998; Wells and Associates, 1998;). Supporters claim that, in exchange for freedom from burdensome rules and regulations, charter schools will be more accountable for student learning. In addition, charter schools will infuse a healthy competition into a bureaucratic and unresponsive public system by providing more educational choices to parents and students. Because of their enhanced autonomy, they will encourage educational innovation, provide more professional opportunities for teachers, and operate more efficiently than regular public schools. For these reasons, charter schools are also expected to serve as educational research and development laboratories and a spur to reform of the public education system as a whole. The appeal of these ideas is apparent in the speedy rate at which new charter schools are opening. Although counts vary, it is conservatively estimated that, during the 1997-1998 school year, about 781 charter schools were in operation in 23 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 100,000 students (RPP International, 1998). President Clinton has called for quadrupling the number of charter schools by the year 2002.

This study was designed to examine the claim that charter schools offer teachers opportunities to enhance their professional lives. Charter school laws passed in many states explicitly intend to empower teachers to become more self-directed professionals by providing them with the autonomy, flexibility and authority they need to design new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. (Contreras, 1995; Mulholland & Bierlein, 1993; Wells and Associates, 1998). Advocates suggest that such empowerment means that teachers in charter schools will be encouraged to take on aspects of a more "professional" role outside the classroom. Examples of this more professional role could include exerting greater influence over school-wide decisions, and having more say in how they organize their day and how they structure relationships with colleagues (Corwin & Flaherty, 1995). Ultimately, according to this theoretical perspective, these more empowered teachers would be better able to serve their students by creating educational environments that will lead to improved student outcomes (Marks & Louis, 1997).

Research Questions

This study examines whether charter schools provide more professional opportunities for teachers by comparing the perceptions of teachers in charter schools and traditional public schools about aspects of teaching and their work environment. There were three central questions:

1. How do charter school teachers perceive issues of empowerment compared to teachers in traditional public schools?
2. How do charter school teachers perceive aspects of school climate compared to teachers in traditional public schools?
3. How do charter school teachers perceive aspects of working conditions compared to traditional public school teachers?

The Colorado Charter Schools Act

When Colorado legislators passed one of the nation's earliest and strongest charter school laws in 1993, they explicitly adopted the perspective that local control of schools and "teacher professionalism" must increase if public education is to improve. The Colorado charter school law is considered "strong" because it includes a mechanism for appealing disputed charter school applications to the Colorado State Board of Education. That is, local boards of education and/or school districts do not alone have final say over whether a charter school will or will not be approved for their district.

According to the state's Charter Schools Act, a charter school in Colorado is a public school operated by a group of parents, teachers, and/or community members as a semi-autonomous school of choice within a school district, operating under a contract between the members of the charter school community and the local board of education. Such schools were purposefully created to provide an avenue for educators and others "to take responsible risks and create new, innovative, more flexible ways of educating all children within the public school system." Essential characteristics of charter schools were to be school-centered governance, autonomy, and a clear design for how and what students learn. Another clearly stated objective was "to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site." During the 1998 legislative session, the Colorado General Assembly re-authorized the Charter Schools Act without a future sunset, signaling the evolution of charter schools from a reform experiment to a permanent part of the public education infrastructure in Colorado. Another bill, passed in 1999, increased the required amount of state per-pupil allotment going to charter schools from 80% to 95% of the public school average, as well as the base upon which that percentage was calculated. Although charter schools still served only a small percentage of the state's public school students in 1999, the charter schools movement found a receptive audience in Colorado. During the 1998-1999 school year, for example, approximately 60 charter schools were in operation statewide, serving approximately 14,000 students, and it was anticipated that another ten to twelve

schools would open in the 1999-2000 school year (Colorado Department of Education, 1999).

What We Know About Teachers in Charter Schools

Charter schools are still a relatively new phenomenon, and their sheer diversity has made them a difficult subject to study in any systematic way. Significant research on charter schools is just beginning to emerge. Like map-makers in a foreign land, the early charter school researchers have been largely concerned with describing the broad contours of the movement and the new schools it has produced through the collection of descriptive statistics and case studies that provide portraits of different charter schools in various states. Questions have focused on areas such as the variations in charter school laws; the reasons charter schools are started; their educational programs; their start-up problems; school, parent, teacher and student characteristics and satisfaction levels; charter school relations with school districts; and questions about how to measure student achievement and hold charter schools accountable for improved student learning. Although questions about the experiences of teachers are included in most questionnaires and evaluations of charter schools, only a couple of relatively small studies to date have teachers as their primary focus.

Early studies of charter schools have, however, provided preliminary evidence about who teaches in charter schools. Charter school teachers are often younger than their counterparts in traditional schools, have less teaching experience, hold fewer advanced degrees, and are mostly--but not always--certified, although charter school legislation generally does not require certification (Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement [CAREI], 1997; Colorado Department of Education, 1996; 1998; Finn, Manno, Beirlein, & Vanourek, 1997). Teachers report going to work in charter schools for a variety of reasons, including more freedom and flexibility, family teaching and learning atmosphere, increased decision-making, dedicated staff, and enhanced accountability (Beirlein, 1996). The research suggests that charter school teachers are generally quite satisfied so far with their experiences despite what appear to be some fairly common concerns, such as heavy workloads, inadequate facilities, relatively low salaries and tenuous job security (Beirlein, 1996; Corwin & Flaherty, 1995; Finn, Manno, Beirlein, & Vanourek, 1997; Wells and Associates, 1998). In Colorado, for example, the average teacher salary in 32 charter schools included in the state's most recent evaluation study was $26,802, significantly lower than the $37,240 state-wide average teacher salary (though this may be a by-product of the years of experience of teachers in the different types of schools). Of the teachers who responded to the evaluation questionnaire, 5% were current members of their local teachers association, compared to about 80% statewide. Teachers reported a high levels of satisfaction with most key aspects of their schools, but listed as their top concerns inadequate facilities/resources, heavy workload, parents, leadership/board, staff/teachers, and salary/benefits

(Colorado Department of Education, 1999).

In one of the earliest and most extensive studies on charter schools nationwide, researchers at the Hudson Institute (Finn, Manno, & Bierlein, 1996) collected survey data from 521 teachers working in 36 charter schools in 10 states. The researchers found that charter school teachers are a diverse lot who prize what the school is doing, like working in it, and believe it is succeeding. Satisfaction was highest when it came to educational matters (curriculum, teaching, class size, etc.) and lowest when it came to non-educational matters (food, facilities, sports, etc.). Similarly, the Minnesota Charter Schools Evaluation (CAREI, 1997) also found that teachers reported high levels of satisfaction with their charter school experience (81 percent satisfied or very satisfied versus 6 percent dissatisfied or very dissatisfied). About one in four expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of their school building or salaries. However, this evaluation report also noted that compared to teachers nationwide who have completed the same survey, charter school staff members' level of satisfaction is fairly typical for all categories surveyed.

Theory to Practice: Charter Schools and the Empowerment of Teachers

Although appearing new to many observers, the charter school concept is actually based on ideas that have been evolving among educational policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers for the past 25 years (Anderson & Marsh, 1998). Most of these ideas revolve around the educational benefits to be derived from the de-centralization of school decision-making and include such related goals as the re-organization of schools around the task of improving teaching and learning, and the need to enhance the professionalism of teachers. Teacher professionalism, in particular, emerged as an educational reform initiative in the mid-1980s and often accompanied policies to increase decision-making authority and accountability at the school level. Recognizing teachers as a source of technical expertise for the improvement of schools, advocates of enhanced professionalism or "empowerment" argued for increasing the authority of teachers over both school and classroom working conditions (Marks & Louis, 1997; Sykes, 1990). A "professional" conception of teaching, as opposed to a more centralized, bureaucratic conception of teaching, came to include such attributes as: (a) school-level decentralized decision-making in democratically governed schools; (b) extensive professional control with collective autonomy and decision-making authority over curricula, school policies, assessment, budget, hiring, and evaluation of peers; (c) collegiality among staff; (d) flexible work schedules; (e) collaborative, on-going professional development of teachers; and (f) accountability as measured by the effectiveness of instruction (Boettiger, 1998; Dusewicz & Beyer, 1988;). In short, enhanced teacher professionalism, or empowerment, is generally viewed as teacher participation in all decision-making directed toward carrying out the school's instructional mission, both in the classroom and throughout the school.

Several studies have addressed the issue of teacher professionalism, or empowerment, in charter schools, although there is little agreement as to the definition of the term as it applies to charter schools, or on how to measure it. For example, it is not always clear whether questions about teacher empowerment refer to an enhancement of teachers' long-standing classroom autonomy or increased teacher decision-making in a wider, school-wide arena. Most of the data are based on teacher self-reports with very little use of comparisons from traditional schools. Nevertheless, there is some preliminary evidence that charter school teachers do tend to feel more "professional"--however the term is defined. For example, Shore (1997) explored newly created opportunities for teachers in California charter schools. Based on textual analysis of 86 charter proposal documents and interviews with selected directors and teachers, she concluded that most charter school teachers have primary responsibility for governance, participate in hiring and peer evaluation, experience fewer bureaucratic constraints, and have considerable control over their working environments. Corwin and Flaherty (1995) also asked questions about what roles charter school teachers perform. In an analysis of 230 questionnaires returned by teachers in 66 charter schools operating in California, they found that teachers reported more influence over the curriculum and discipline policy than over grouping students and in-service instruction. Teachers in new (not converted) charter schools, elementary schools, and "high-autonomy" charter schools, in particular, reported having more influence and being less constrained by rules. A high percentage of teachers said they experimented more in the classroom, were freer to teach as they wished, and had more influence over the content and subjects that they teach. Most of these teachers considered the charter structure essential or valuable to changed practice. Finn, Manno, Beirlein, and Vanourek (1997) reported that most of the charter school teachers they surveyed were finding "personal fulfillment and professional reward" (Part I, p. 1) and had more chances to be involved with school policy making and planning. More than 90% of the teachers said they were "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with charter schools' educational philosophy, size, fellow teachers and students; more than three-quarters of the teachers said they were satisfied with school administrators, the level of teacher decision-making, and the challenge of starting a new school. More than 70% of Colorado charter school teachers recently surveyed reported that they were satisfied with "teacher participation in school decisions" (Colorado Department of Education, 1999).

Other researchers point out that the experience of teachers in charter schools is likely to vary, based on school culture and context (Datnow et al., 1994). That was the conclusion of the Minnesota Charter Schools Evaluation (CAREI, 1997) which was based in part on site visits at 16 different charter schools. The evaluation found that the professional roles of teachers vary dramatically: some schools have a designated principal who serves as the authority figure; while others have expanded or significantly modified the teacher role to include additional responsibilities.

One of the most extensive studies of charter schools to date--the

UCLA Charter School Study (Wells and Associates, 1998)--suggested that the enhanced teacher empowerment found in some charter schools can be a mixed blessing, bringing more freedom but little support. In their case studies of 17 charter schools and 10 school districts in the state of California, these researchers found that teachers in charter schools value their freedom, relatively small classes, and esprit de corps, but heavy workloads are an issue. They continue: "On the issue of empowerment, our primary findings are mixed. First, the teachers in our study found great satisfaction in the intimate, personal settings that small charter schools offered and took professional pride in being among a select group of school reform pioneers. Yet, many of these teachers, inundated by non-classroom responsibilities, struggled with weariness and exhaustion, and openly speculated about their ability to sustain their level of commitment over the long haul" (p. 49).

Feelings or Fact?

From the beginning of the charter school movement a few studies have reported that teachers said they "felt like professionals" in charter schools (Bierlein, 1996), but didn't offer much, if any, data on how those feelings were directly tied to practice. Interestingly, two recent reports have raised the possibility that such feelings of enhanced professionalism--or what Wells and Associates (1998) call the "esprit de corps effect"--may be more feeling than reality. The UCLA study noted that teachers in charter schools often differentiated themselves from teachers in regular public schools, and that those differences included being "more professional" than their public school counterparts, and feeling great pride in their charter school setting. Yet, despite this "esprit de corps" in these schools, they found little differences in how teachers actually taught. They concluded, "most teachers could not say what it was that they do in a charter school that they could not have done in a regular public school, indicating that their new professional identity may be based on factors other than their teaching practice" (p 51).

A second study, conducted by SRI International for the California state legislature (Anderson & Marsh, 1998), mentioned the same uncertainty as to what teachers mean when they say they feel more powerful in charter schools. After conducting case studies of 12 charter schools and collecting descriptive data from telephone interviews with members of 124 charter schools, researchers reported that charter school status gave staff members a sense of empowerment and of being part of a significant reform process. One teacher explained: "The fact that we are a charter, that we are in charge of our destiny, has forced an attitude change. We have a sense of power we never had before, whether it is true or an illusion" (p. 19).

Method

Sample and Data Collection

This study employed a comparative survey design to compare

perceptions of teachers in charter schools and traditional public schools (TPS) about aspects of their work and work environment. A matched cluster sampling procedure was used to access comparable samples of teachers in the two types of schools. First, the cooperation of administrators and teachers in about two dozen Colorado charter schools that had been operating for at least two years in 1997-1998 was solicited, resulting in a sample of 16 charter schools from across the state. Those schools were then matched, to the degree possible, with existing traditional public schools, based on school location and grades taught. Given the special nature of charter schools, close matches were usually not possible: in Colorado, charter schools on average are significantly smaller than TPSs and generally do not fit the traditional grade level configuration of elementary, middle, or high school. Many serve a combination of elementary and middle school students, and some include all grades. Because charter schools are small, two or three charter schools were matched to each cooperating TPS, with seven TPSs used as matches. Thus, the schools represented the "clusters" in the cluster sampling design. The final sample of teachers was then drawn from the two cluster types of schools, and included 99 charter school teachers and 103 traditional public school teachers. A total of 217 surveys were administered to charter school teachers and 219 to TPS teachers. Response rate was 46% for charter school teachers and 47% for TPS teachers.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument included forty forced-choice, five open-ended, and eight demographic questions. The forced-choice items measured dimensions of teacher "empowerment," school climate, and working conditions. The "empowerment index" was derived from Marks and Louis (1997) which included fourteen questions the authors divided into four dimensions. We ran a factor analysis with our data and derived three composite variables we labeled as "empowerment in the school wide arena" (dealt with issues like involvement of teachers in hiring, budgeting, determining professional assignments, determining content of in-service programs), "empowerment in the classroom with students" (dealt with issues like how much control teachers felt over disciplining students, determining the behavior code, setting policy on grouping of students, involvement and influence in decisions that affect them), and "empowerment in the classroom with curriculum content" (included control over selecting content, teaching techniques, instructional materials, and establishing the curriculum).

The "school climate" scale was adopted from Dusewicz and Beyer (1988) which included twelve questions presented in three dimensions. Again, we factor analyzed the scale with our data and derived three new composite variables. These included "collective responsibility for teaching and learning" (items like shared responsibility for achieving school goals, all being involved in goal establishment, articulation, and review, participatory techniques being employed, teachers working amicably on common problems, the

school having a consistent and shared value system), "emphasis on academic learning" (dealt with the school having high expectations for academic achievement, there being an academic emphasis and belief that all can learn, staff believing that they can help all students to learn, the school motivating students to learn), and "school rewards students for high achievement' (included items like the school giving honors and awards for academic achievement, the school providing opportunities for children to excel and recognizing such efforts).

The working conditions component of the instrument included a "job satisfaction scale" from Bacharach (1986) and additional questions about working conditions derived from Ginsberg and Berry (1990). A factor analysis of these fourteen questions yielded three composite variables. They were labeled as "job contentment" (included authority to carry out work, sense of present job in light of career expectations, the chance the job provides to be successful, current satisfaction with school discipline, and the extent to which working conditions enable effectiveness), "teaching and learning conditions" (dealt with satisfaction with workload, class size, preparation and planning time), and "physical plant and support conditions" (included satisfaction with issues like the school's physical condition, the classroom's physical condition, instructional resources available, opportunities for professional growth, job security, and salary).

We conducted reliability analyses of each sub-scale we derived from the instrument. The Alpha coefficients were all acceptable, ranging from .59 to .87, with all scales but one at the .7 level or above. The five open-ended questions asked teachers to describe the most positive and negative things about being a teacher at their schools, if their students regularly worked with computers, and (for charter school teachers who have taught in a regular public school) how teaching in a charter school differed from teaching in a TPS. Teachers were also asked to volunteer any other comments they might have. Demographic questions addressed gender, age, race/ethnicity, the highest degree earned, years of teaching experience, certification status, and grade(s) taught.

The higher proportion of females in the charter school sample is related to the fact that many charter schools in Colorado serve elementary or elementary and middle school students and a higher proportion of females teach at those levels. An analysis of gender and grade level taught by respondents broken out by type of school shows that the male teachers in the sample tend to cluster at the high school level in traditional public schools. Moreover, only a small minority of Colorado charter schools fit the traditional grade level configuration of elementary, middle, or high school, making true matched comparisons to traditional public schools difficult.

Data Analysis

We began our analyses of the research questions by conducting one-way analyses of variance for each of the three sets of dependent variables and type of school as the two-level factor. Given the wide

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discrepancies between the two groups of teachers on the "years of experience" and "school size" variables noted in Table 1 however, we followed up these initial ANOVAs with one-way analyses of covariance using the "years of experience" and "school size" variables as covariates. None of the ANCOVA analyses produced probability values that deviated from the findings of statistical significance obtained from the ANOVA analyses. Thus, the ANOVAs are reported for ease of understanding. In addition, a series of tables are given which present descriptive statistics and corresponding effect sizes. Finally, the open-ended questions were individually analyzed for themes and patterns.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

Survey respondents were asked a number of demographic questions, including their gender, age, race/ethnicity, years of teaching experience, highest degree earned, certification status, and grade(s) taught. Table 1 provides a comparison of the final sample of charter school teachers and traditional public school teachers revealing some differences between the two groups: in general, more charter school teachers are female, are slightly younger, have earned fewer post-baccalaureate degrees, and have fewer years of teaching experience than their TPS counterparts. The basic differences between the two groups are very similar to those reported in two Colorado charter school evaluations (Colorado Department of Education, 1998; 1999). One result of that difficulty is an imbalance in response from the two groups in regards to grade level taught, with respondents from charter schools including more elementary teachers and respondents from traditional public schools including more high school teachers.

Table 1

Descriptive Information of Charter and Traditional School Teachers

Characteristic	Charter Schools	Traditional Schools
Gender		
Female	89.9%	63.7%
Male	10.1%	36.3%
Age (mean)	39.1	42.1
Race/ethnicity		
White	96.9%	94%
Black	0%	1%
Hispanic	0%	3%
Native American	2%	0%
Asian	1%	2%
Highest degree earned		
Bachelor's	59.6%	38.2%
Master's	40.4%	60.8%
Doctorate	0%	1%
Years of teaching experience (mean)	9.1	15
Grade(s) taught		
Elementary	63.5%	30.4%
Middle school	24%	7.8%
High School	7.8%	61.8%
Size of School (mean)	327	998
Certification status		
Certified in area teaching	82.5%	97%
Not certified in area teaching	7.2%	3.0%
Not certified	10.3%	0%

Analyses of Research Questions

The first research question asked: "How do charter school teachers perceive issues of empowerment compared to teachers in traditional public schools?" The ANOVA comparisons for each of the empowerment composite variables are presented in Table 2, and corresponding

descriptive and effect size information in Table 3. As can be seen in Table 2, analyses of two of the three empowerment variables, "empowerment in the school wide arena," and "empowerment in the classroom with students", yielded statistically significant differences between the teachers from the charter schools and the teachers from the traditional schools ($F[1,191] = 8.60$, $p = 0.004$), and ($F[1,196] = 11.00$, $p = 0.001$) respectively. Looking at the means in Table 3, teachers in the traditional schools perceived themselves to be more empowered in the school-wide arena (3.00 and 2.60 respectively), but less so in the classroom with students (3.64 and 4.03 respectively). Effect sizes associated with those mean differences (-0.48 and +0.46 respectively) suggest moderately strong practical significance to those mean differences.

Table 2

One-Way ANOVAs for Empowerment Variables

Empowerment Variables	df	F Value	*p*
In the school-wide arena	1, 191	8.60	0.004
In the classroom with students	1, 196	11.00	0.001
In the classroom with curriculum content	1, 199	1.31	0.254

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Effect Sizes for Empowerment Variables

Empowerment Variables	n	Mean	SD	ES
In the school-wide arena				
Charter schools	92	2.60	1.07	
Traditional schools	101	3.00	0.85	- 0.48
In the classroom with students				
Charter schools	99	4.03	0.81	
Traditional schools	99	3.64	0.86	+ 0.46
In the classroom with curriculum content				
Charter schools	98	3.50	1.27	
Traditional schools	103	3.68	1.01	- 0.18

Finally, the mean scores for the third empowerment dimension, "empowerment in the classroom with curriculum content," were similar for teachers in traditional and charter schools, with no statistically significant difference.

The second research question asked: "How do charter school teachers perceive aspects of school climate compared to teachers in traditional public schools?" Analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparisons for each of the school climate composite variables are presented in Table 4, and corresponding descriptive and effect size information in Table 5. As can be seen in Table 4, the pattern of findings was very similar to the findings with the empowerment variables reported above, with two of the three contrasts ("school rewards students for high achievement" and "emphasis on academic learning) achieving statistical significance ($\underline{F}[1,200] = 11.47$, $\underline{p} = 0.001$, and $\underline{F}[1,200] = 18.81$, $\underline{p} < 0.000$), and the third not. Also similar to the empowerment variables, the directions of those findings differed for each of the two contrasts achieving statistical significance.

Table 4

One-Way ANOVAs for School Climate Variables

School Climate Variables	df	F Value	*p*
School rewards students for high achievement	1, 200	11.47	0.001
Emphasis on academic learning	1, 200	18.81	0.000
Collective responsibility for teaching and learning	1, 197	3.36	0.068

Looking at Table 5, teachers in traditional schools perceived their respective schools to have a climate that rewarded their students for high achievement at a significantly greater level than teachers in charter schools (4.32 and 3.92, respectively). Conversely, charter school teachers perceived the schools in which they worked to have significantly greater emphasis on academic learning than did their traditional school teacher counterparts (4.52 and 4.11 respectively). Effect sizes associated with those mean differences (- 0.56 and + 0.54 respectively), again similar to the empowerment variables, suggest moderately strong practical significance to those mean differences.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and Effect Sizes for School Climate Variables

School Climate Variables	n	Mean	SD	ES
School rewards students for high achievement				
Charter schools	99	3.92	0.94	
Traditional schools	103	4.32	0.71	- 0.56
Emphasis on academic learning				
Charter schools	99	4.52	0.56	
Traditional schools	103	4.11	0.74	+ 0.54
Collective responsibility for teaching and learning				
Charter schools	99	3.65	0.97	
Traditional schools	100	3.88	0.84	+ 0.28

The final research question asked: "How do charter school teachers perceive aspects of working conditions compared to traditional public school teachers?" Tables 6 and 7 present the results of the analyses in a manner similar to the empowerment and school climate variables.

For the composite variable we labeled as "job contentment," the charter school teachers had a slightly higher mean score than the traditional public school teachers, but this difference was not statistically significant, using a criterion alpha level of $p < 0.0167$. In terms of "teaching and learning conditions," the charter school teachers had a statistically significant ($F[1,197] = 12.41$, $p = 0.001$) higher mean score (3.44) than did the traditional public school teachers (2.94). The effect size for this comparison (+0.49) was also indicative of a legitimate practical difference between the perceptions of these two groups of teachers. For the third composite working conditions variable, "physical plant and support conditions," the traditional public school teachers had a higher mean score (3.72) than the charter school teachers (2.65). This difference was statistically significant ($F[1,198] = 40.82$, $p < 0.000$), and the effect size of -0.93 reflected the strongest magnitude of differences between these two groups of teachers.

Table 6

One-Way ANOVAs for Job Satisfaction Variables

Job Satisfaction Variables	df	F Value	*p*
Job contentment	1, 196	4.04	0.046
Teaching and learning conditions	1, 197	12.41	0.001
Physical plant and support conditions	1, 198	40.82	0.000

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics and Effect Sizes for Job Satisfaction Variables

Job Satisfaction Variables	n	Mean	SD	ES
Job contentment				
Charter schools	98	4.11	0.86	
Traditional schools	100	3.87	0.82	+0.29
Teaching and learning conditions				
Charter schools	98	3.44	0.95	
Traditional schools	101	2.94	1.01	+ 0.49
Physical plant and support conditions				
Charter schools	98	2.65	1.21	
Traditional schools	102	3.72	1.15	-0.93

Discussion

The findings related to empowerment issues reveal some expected and some surprising results. That traditional school teachers have a statistically significant higher mean score than the charter school teachers on the empowerment variable, "empowerment in the school wide arena," contradicts much of the rhetoric and early literature suggesting that teachers in charter schools will be able to take on a more "professional" role outside the classroom, such as participation in hiring decisions, budgeting, determining professional assignments, the content of in-service programs, or any other school-wide issue that may ultimately impact the delivery of the instructional program. Clearly, the literature on teacher empowerment included such school-wide issues as part of their conception of what empowerment should mean (Marks & Louis, 1997; Sykes, 1990), yet our comparative data show that such hopes for teachers in charter

schools may not be as predicted. This finding may reflect the emphasis in many school districts on site-based management practices. In addition, those who suggested greater authority and increased decision-making for charter school teachers (e.g. Bierlein, 1996; Finn et al., 1997; Mulholland & Bierlein, 1993; Shore, 1997) based their findings on analyses of laws and/or reports of charter teachers alone, without the use of comparative data. The nature of governance and parent involvement at many Colorado charter schools may also be a factor: although the state's Charter Schools Act provides for the founding of charter schools by teachers, almost all of them are are parent-founded schools in which parents hold a majority on governing boards. Some of the responses to our open-ended questions may help explain this reality for charter school teachers, as many complained about poor administration or overly intrusive charter school boards. Other than their concern about inadequate facilities, such school wide management-related issues were the most common negative comments reported to us. For example, charter teachers reported: "The board is made up of parents and many are not educators and lack knowledge and experience which causes many problems;" - "there is a lack of trust by the administration and the board;" - "the most negative thing about this school is the politics occuring between the board, the administration and the staff;" - "parent control of the school is excessive...many want to pick the textbooks and don't know how to do it..;" - "Our governing board has too much power! They are micro-managing and do not value teachers;" - "Our board is inflexible and only listen to a small parent component;" - "The most negative thing is a parent board, who are not educators, making academic decisions."

On the other hand, the finding that charter school teachers had a statistically significant higher mean score than traditional public school teachers for classroom-related empowerment supports the researchers and charter school advocates who predicted greater autonomy, influence, freedom and flexibility in these schools (e.g., Bierlein, 1996; Corwin & Flaherty, 1995; Shore, 1997). And the charter school teachers' responses to our open-ended question about what they liked most about teaching in this setting underscored this sense of classroom empowerment with students. Teachers consistently reported that they enjoyed a great deal of flexibility, that the small class size allowed them to do a variety of different things, and that they enjoyed working with students who clearly wanted to be there. Some typical comments included: "I get to teach here..there is less disciplining;" - "I have the freedom to try new techniques;" - "I actually get to teach..I am not pulled out of the classroom for the multitude of district pull-outs;" - "I have the freedom to be creative and innovative while expanding and elaborating on the global core curriculum;" - "the teaching situation allows great freedom and flexibility;" - "I have the freedom to develop my program as I see appropriate;" - "we have enthusiastic students who want to be here;" - "There are few discipline problems and students come prepared to learn;" - "the small class size allows for close relationships with students--none can be ignored or fall into the woodwork."

Interestingly, there was no difference in the responses of charter or traditional public school teachers in the area of "empowerment with the curriculum content." This finding is intriguing because the potential ability

of smaller, more autonomous charter schools to serve as laboratories for teacher-driven educational innovation has always been a strong argument for such schools. Our comparison revealed that teachers in both types of schools felt pretty good about their degree of control over curriculum (mean of 3.5 for charter school teachers, 3.6845 for traditional school teachers). In the open-ended comments by both sets of teachers there were consistently positive comments regarding the flexibility they felt they had over curriculum decisions. While the charter school teachers were more adamant in their remarks in our open-ended questions, the statistical comparison suggests that this feeling may be driven more by the hype surrounding the charter school movement than any real difference in curriculum-related empowerment. To some degree, this finding is probably related to what we label as the "back-to-the-future" nature of the educational programs in many Colorado charter schools: that is, a significant number of the state's charter schools (17 out of 49 schools existing in 1997) are back-to-basics schools that use the largely pre-determined, highly structured Core Knowledge curriculum. Thus, this version of educational reform we characterize as being "back-to-the-future." Interestingly, representatives from a number of professional educational organizations in the state (Colorado Parent Teacher Association, Colorado Education Association, Colorado Association of School Executives, Colorado Association of School Boards, and the Colorado Federation of Teachers) recently expressed concern that charter schools have not, as yet, established themselves as labs of innovation or experimentation (Colorado Department of Education, 1999).

Given the literature regarding charter schools, our findings regarding the three school climate composite variables also reveal some unexpected results. Since charter school teachers are hired to fit the specific mission of the charter, it was expected that the charter school teachers would score higher on the school climate variable "collective responsibility for teaching and learning." But just as Wells and Associates (1998) and Anderson and Marsh (1998) found that charter school teachers could not articulate why they felt their professional identity was different from traditional public school teachers, we found no statistically significant difference on the school climate variable dealing with shared responsibility, collective action and common mission/goals. Interestingly, the charter school teachers expressed a strong sense of a common mission and shared goals in the open-ended question about what was positive in their school, which the public school teachers only rarely asserted. Yet, the statistical comparison shows no difference in this school climate factor.

However, the charter school teachers did have a statistically significant higher mean score on the school climate factor we labeled as "emphasis on academic learning." Perhaps this is where the idea of a shared mission in the charter schools is being expressed. Clearly, the comments by charter school teachers highlighted their academic emphasis and the ability to focus on academics given small class size and few discipline problems. But it is almost counterintuitive that the traditional public school teachers would then have a statistically significant higher mean score on the school climate variable, "school rewards students for high achievement." This may be a result of the state's emphasis and

pressure on improving test scores, and suggest that charter schools expect high achievement and therefore don't reward it as the traditional public schools do. But it seems inconsistent given the opposite difference reported regarding emphasis on academic learning.

The results regarding working conditions were most consistent with the current literature. Concerning what we labeled as "job contentment," we found no statistically significant difference between the charter and traditional public school teachers. While much of the charter school literature reports that teachers in these schools are very satisfied with their jobs (Colorado Department of Education, 1999; Finn et al., 1997; RPP International, 1997), our finding of no difference in job contentment underscores what the Minnesota evaluation reported, namely that the charter teachers' levels of satisfaction were typical for other teachers nationwide. Clearly, both the traditional public school teachers and charter school teachers had areas of distinct dissatisfaction. These are revealed in the differences in the working conditions composite variables of "teaching and learning conditions," and "physical plant and support conditions." The charter school teachers had a statistically significant higher mean score on the teaching and learning conditions factor, while the traditional public school teachers had a higher score on the physical plant and support conditions factor. These findings support the literature which reports that charter school teachers appreciate the smaller class sizes, lack of discipline problems, parents who are active and supportive, while they disdain poor facilities, classroom conditions, lack of support materials, and questionable job security (Bierlein, 1996; Finn et al., 1997; Colorado Department of Education, 1999; Corwin & Flaherty, 1995; RPP International, 1997). Indeed, lack of financial support and poor facilities were the most common concerns expressed by charter school teachers to our open-ended query about the most negative aspect of teaching there. In terms of support in schools, the responses to our question about computer use revealed that traditional public school teachers had far greater access to computers than most charter school teachers, underscoring the lack of support these teachers cited. And as our statistical comparisons suggest, for the public school teachers it was issues like student apathy, discipline problems, and large class size that dominated their concerns expressed in the open-ended questions about the most negative aspects of teaching.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our goal was to examine the claim that charter schools will empower teachers to become more self-directed professionals by providing them with the increased autonomy, flexibility, and authority necessary to assume responsibility for the development and delivery of new, innovative approaches to teaching and learning at their school sites. Although charter schools obviously employ a corps of dedicated teachers who feel energized by the role they play in founding these new schools, a review of our findings shows that, for the most part, the rhetoric and early research findings regarding enhanced teacher "empowerment" in charter schools outpaces the reality of actual teacher experience when compared to the experiences of teachers in traditional public schools. The data do indicate that charter school teachers enjoy more professional flexibility

within the four walls of their classrooms. However, they are generally not *taking on an expanded role in the larger school arena, and do not appear* to have any deeper involvement in curricular decision-making or innovation than their TPS counterparts. Perhaps the most obvious conclusion that can be drawn from these results is that teachers in both charter schools and traditional public schools are relatively content with their work and have much in common, despite some fairly significant differences between the two groups when it comes to identifying primary sources of job-related satisfactions and dissatisfactions.

Regarding teachers' traditional classroom role, the data suggest that working in smaller, more independent charter schools does provide teachers with a sense of empowerment. This "freedom to teach" is, perhaps not surprisingly, related to smaller class size and better disciplined students. Charter school teachers generated higher mean scores on the composite variable called "empowerment in the classroom with students" (which deals largely with classroom management and student behavior), and on the working conditions variable called "teaching and learning conditions" (which deals largely with class size). Charter school teachers consistently reported in the open-ended responses that they enjoyed a great deal of flexibility in the classroom, that small class size allowed them to do a variety of different things, and that they enjoyed working with students who chose to be there with more involved parents. They also related their sense of classroom empowerment to the charter structure--although that perception appears to be more related to class size and student discipline than it is to any real difference in teacher participation in school governance or control over the curriculum. Interestingly, there was no statistically significant difference between charter school teachers and traditional public school teachers on the composite variable called "empowerment in the classroom with curriculum content." The fact that the processes surrounding the instructional core remain similar to other public school settings indicates that the charter school movement has not resulted in the degree of educational innovation and experimentation envisioned by its advocates, either in individual teacher's classrooms, or on the school-wide level. The additional fact that traditional school teachers have a statistically significant higher mean score than charter school teachers on the variable "empowerment in the school wide arena" underscores the impression that charter schools, as practiced in Colorado, are not delivering on the significantly enhanced level of teacher professionalism hoped for by educational reformers.

Charter school teachers also scored significantly higher on the school climate factor we labeled as "emphasis on academic learning." Again, this finding is probably not surprising. Given that the central argument for charter schools is that they will be more accountable for the academic achievement of their students than regular public schools, it makes sense that charter school teachers would pay sharp attention to this critical mission. Smaller class size, fewer discipline problems, and more involved parents certainly help (when queried about the most negative aspects of teaching, traditional public school teachers were more likely than charter school teachers to complain about student apathy, discipline

problems, and large class size). However, this picture is not without its complications - one of the most interesting findings of this study is the lack of statistically significant difference between charter school teachers and traditional public school teachers on the school climate variable dealing with collective responsibility for teaching and learning, which includes such critical measures as shared responsibility for achieving school goals, a shared value system, school-wide review of values and goals, participatory management, and teachers working together on common problems. Because charter schools are in a better position to hire teachers to fit their specific missions, it was expected that charter school teachers would score higher on this variable. The unexpected results are probably an indication of the dedication and commitment of both groups of teachers, and underscores again what they have in common rather than their differences.

One of the most encouraging findings of this study is the relatively high level of contentment both groups of teachers find when they go to work each day, despite distinct areas of dissatisfaction. Indeed, the two groups' areas of dissatisfaction are almost mirror images of each other. While charter school teachers value their smaller class sizes and greater freedom to focus on academics, they are considerably less pleased with their school facilities, the availability of instructional resources (including technology), their salaries, or their job security. Traditional public school teachers, on the other hand, are much more satisfied with almost all aspects of the support they receive, but tend to be somewhat less satisfied with the teaching and learning conditions they find in their classrooms. Aside from pointing out that being a teacher in any setting has its rewards and its frustrations, these findings raise an important issue of sustainability for charter school teachers: Given their relative lack of support, how long will they be willing or able to keep going?

Finally, this study raised some very interesting issues about the mixed blessings of high parental involvement in charter schools. There is no doubt that concerned and supportive parents are an invaluable resource for children and for schools. On the other hand, parents who want greater involvement in their children's schooling can apparently be a very formidable group with whom to work. For teachers who are scrambling to help set up new schools, get an educational program running, and meet high expectations, intrusive parental involvement can present another set of challenges-- particularly if parents insist on interjecting themselves into academic decision-making. At the very least, it is ironic that parents who create schools that are theoretically intended to enhance the professional roles of teachers can so often undermine their own good intentions.

In terms of future directions, we see a number of areas for potential research. Clearly, this study did not control for any measure of school effectiveness, and future studies should examine the impact of student performance in both types of schools on teacher empowerment issues. One of the most interesting and compelling directions for future research is drawn from the widely divergent policy contexts that surround the charter school initiatives in each state. They differ so dramatically (Bulkley, 1999; Mauhs-Pugh, 1995) that it may be nearly impossible to conduct state-delimited research and expect to generalize to other states. If multiple

states are included in future research studies, the states themselves should probably be included as a variable in the analyses, at least until their contribution in those analyses is found to be non-significant.

Another potential area for future research is suggested by the relatively large standard deviations on many of the composite variables reported in Tables 3, 5, and 7. Given that the charter school and TPS samples are fairly large, the large number of standard deviations exceeding .8 indicates potentially interesting within-group variations that could illuminate the between-group variations that were reported.

The highly charged political nature of charter schools also necessitates rigorous attention to important design features, particularly when multiple schools are involved and student performance is among the dependent variables. Such design features might include: (1) waiting until charter schools are at least two or three years old to give them a chance to mature and "become themselves"; (2) equating (either through sampling design or covariance measurement) students at entry into the schools; and (3) disaggregating analyses to accommodate important school-level variables such as mean enrollments of low SES students, special education students, language minority students, and mobility rates. The stakes are high as research continues on this important experiment in American schooling. It is essential that future research quality be meticulously high as well to inform the policy debate in a credible, even unassailable way for stakeholders from across the policy arena.

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Academic Program Approval and Review Practices in the United State And Selected Foreign Countries

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Abstract
This report outlines general and specific processes for both program approval and program review practices found in 50 states and eight foreign countries and regions. Models that depict these procedures are defined and the strengths and weakness of each are discussed. Alternatives to current practice by state agencies in the U.S. are described that might provide for greater decentralization of these practices while maintaining institutional accountability.

Introduction

Responding to multiple challenges in the governance and

coordination of higher education, state agencies increasingly are examining their structures for carrying out their mandates. Writing for the Education Commission of the States (ECS), McGuinness (1997) predicted that changes would be necessary to correct some structures that were designed for earlier times. Challenges such as the integration of technology into delivery systems for higher education, market pressures, instability in state government leadership, and growing political involvement in state coordination and governance are among the most compelling forces that make these changes likely.

One of the most common responsibilities of state coordinating or governing agencies for higher education is academic program approval and program review. Program approval refers to the process for approval of new academic programs by state higher education agencies or boards and generally is done to curb unnecessary duplication of programs among public institutions. Program review refers to the process of critique of existing academic programs and generally is seen as a strategy for quality and productivity improvements. According to Barak (1991), 45 state agencies undertake some form of program approval and 34 state agencies review at least some existing programs (some reviews are conducted at the state level).

Concerns for quality and for accountability in higher education is increasing in state governments and agencies, putting pressure on traditional statewide coordination functions of these agencies such as program approval and review, budgeting, planning, and monitoring quality. Increasingly, state agencies are seeking ways to decentralize certain functions while, at the same time, increasing accountability. McGuinnes (1997) predicted that states would turn to two quality assurance mechanisms to accommodate these trends. First, he saw a reliance shift from regulatory controls to incentives to ensure public interests. Second, he surmised more coordinated tactics among state and federal governments, accrediting agencies, institutional governing boards, and disciplinary and professional organizations.

This study was undertaken at the request of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) that sought policy alternatives to their current academic program approval and review practices to enable a more decentralized approach to the process in an environment of greater accountability. The study sought to provide these policy alternatives by first collecting base-line information about current academic program approval and review practices in all 50 states and in selected foreign countries and, second, to formulate policy alternatives based upon a synthesis of these findings and upon reasoned judgment about such practices in higher education.

Methodology

All 50 states in the U.S. and eight foreign countries and regions, including Australia, Canada, England, Germany (Lower Saxony), Hong Kong, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Scotland, were selected for study. Data for this study were obtained in two forms: (a) documents obtained from web sites or direct mail and (b) interview results with academic officers of state agencies (no interviews were

conducted with agency representatives from foreign countries or regions). Documents were analyzed to illuminate their academic program approval and review policies and practices. Semi-structured interviews with agency academic officers were conducted to determine perceived strengths and weaknesses of current practices and future plans for change in these procedures. Useful data in one or both forms were obtained from all foreign countries and regions and from 46 states. Information from these sources varied in content. Some written policies were explicit and detailed; others were vague and confined in scope. Likewise, interview results varied from expansive and illuminating to narrow and sketchy. Most data were instructive, however, clearly revealing current practice. Inquiries about future plans for change were met with limited success. Either the officers did not know what changes might occur in their agencies or were cautious in their comments for a variety of reasons.

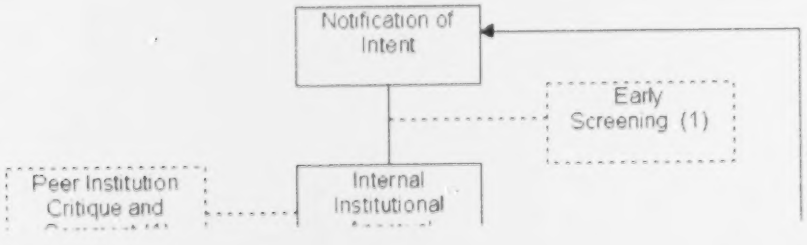
Information from these sources was analyzed for patterns in responses. These synthesized patterns of practice were used to report the findings from the study. Discovered patterns were more normative among program approval practices than from program review practices; therefore, variations in review practices also were synthesized from the data and reported as substratum patterns.

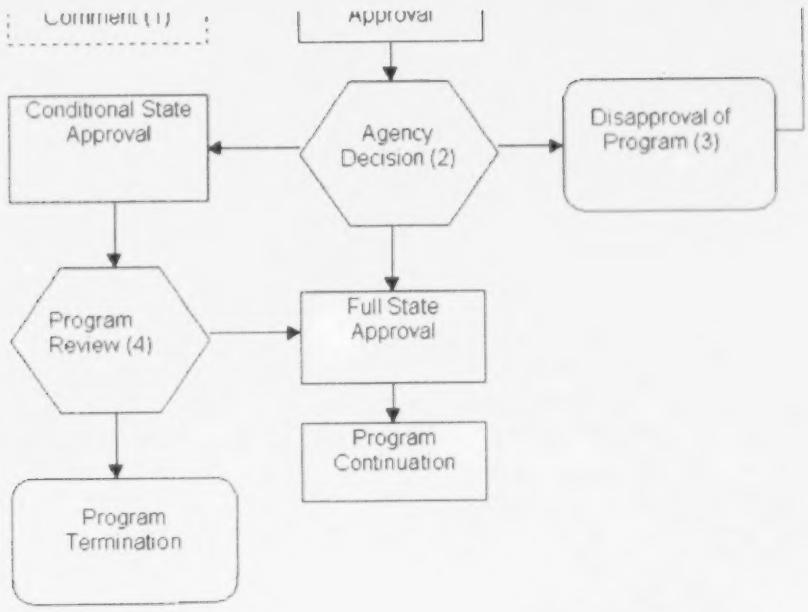
Findings

Findings are presented in four parts: (a) generalized findings about program approval processes, (b) generalized findings about program review processes, (c) summary of program approval and review practices, and (d) generalized program approval and review findings from foreign countries and regions. Generalized findings about program approval and program review are followed next by steps in the processes and, finally, by strengths and weaknesses of the generalized model presented. Distinctive features of the practices from foreign counties and regions follows their generalized findings.

Program Approval Practices in the States

Practices regarding state agency program approval can be summarized and displayed in a generalized model. This model is depicted in Figure 1 and shows widely accepted practices at the institution and at the state agency level where multiple decisions and actions are possible.





Notes:

1. Early screening is used by some states to save time and resources. Good proposals are helped. Poor proposals are discouraged.
2. The process used by state agencies may include internal review by staff, external reviewers, or peer reviews. Criteria include need, demand, duplication, cost, ability to deliver, etc.
3. Some states will aid institutions to revise their proposals even after a program has been disapproved.
4. Review at this stage comes as part of a conditional approval or as part of the criteria for full approval. It may involve rigorous review and include accreditation agencies, outside consultants, or agency staff.

Figure 1. Typical State Approval Process

When proposals are disapproved at the state agency level, some agencies may help institutions improve their proposals and encourage them to resubmit. When proposals are approved at the state agency level, some agencies schedule a subsequent review as part of the approval process while others grant automatic continuation unless a review is triggered by productivity concerns.

Steps in Program Approval by State Agencies

Program approval procedures by state agencies generally followed these steps:
1. Institution determines the feasibility of its intent to plan a new program.
2. Institution notifies the state agency of intent.
3. Institution prepares a draft proposal containing a brief statement identifying the program and addressing the following issues:

- Relation to institutional mission, strategic plan, goals and objectives;

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- Projected source of resources (reallocation, external funds, request for new dollars);
- Student need;
- Relationship to other programs in the system and region.

4. The state agency distributes the proposal to other affected institutions to elicit comments and recommendations.
5. State agency staff comments and makes recommendations on the draft proposal.
6. Institution submits the full proposal addressing some or all of the following issues:

- Centrality to institutional mission and planning
- Need for the proposed program
  - Societal need
  - Occupational need
- Student availability and demand (Enrollment level)
- Reasonableness of program duplication, if any (not including general education programs)
- Adequacy of curriculum design and related learning outcomes
- Adequacy of resources to support the program
  - Adequacy of finances
  - Faculty resources
  - Library resources
  - Student affairs services
  - Physical facilities and instructional equipment
- Adequacy of program administration
- Adequacy of the plan for evaluation and assessment of the program
- Diversity plan for increasing the number of students from underrepresented populations
- Accreditation (Is there a recognized accreditation agency for the program? Will accreditation be pursued?)
- Use of technology

7. The full proposal is reviewed by one or a combination of appropriate governance bodies, external consultants, and/or program review committees consisting of a representative(s) of the program proposing unit, state agency staff, and/or external experts in the area.
8. State agency takes action to:

- Approve (provisional approval or full approval)
- Disapprove
- Defer

9. If provisionally approved, the institution will address the issues raised by the state agency. The state agency reviews the program after a relatively short period (e.g., for one year).
10. If fully approved, the institution will develop and implement the program.
11. If disapproved, the institution may have the right to appeal.

12. After the graduation of the first class of the new program, the program may receive an in-depth comprehensive review.
13. Change to current program status.

Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses of Program Approval Processes by State Agencies

Certain strengths and weaknesses in current were identified as follows:

Strengths of Current Practice

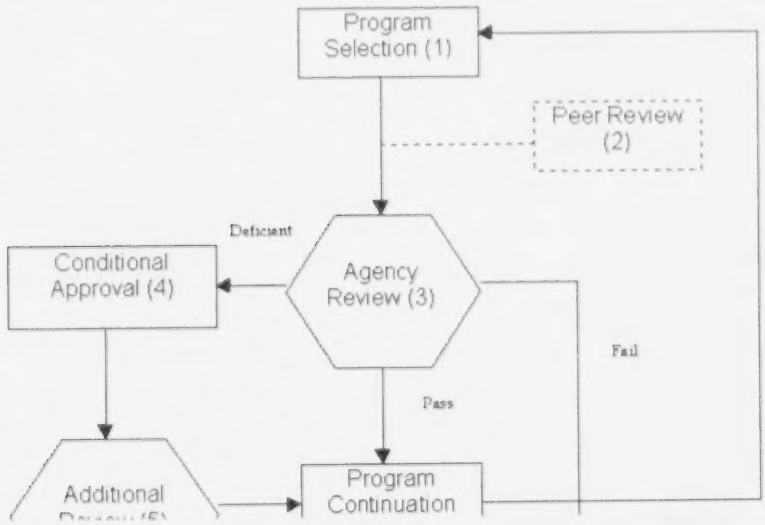
- Tends to improve the quality of the academic program
- Increases interinstitutional communication and collaboration
- Incorporates future assessment criteria and accountability measures
- Ensures demand and need
- Reduces duplication
- Conserves resources
- Stresses application of state planning priorities

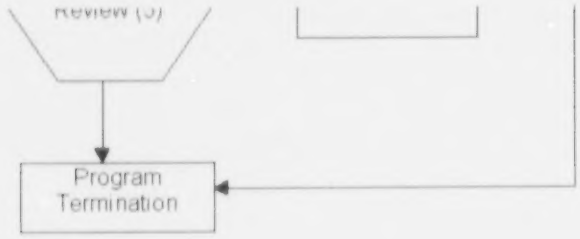
Weaknesses of Current Practice

- Reduces autonomy of the institutions
- Can delay the initiation of needed academic programs
- Decision making may be politicized or arbitrary
- Staffing requirements may be excessive

Generalized Patterns of Program Review Practices in States

All states do not conduct program reviews. Where they are conducted, as occurs in a majority of states, they are conducted in differentiated or even idiosyncratic patterns. Though practiced in a variety of approaches, program review procedures in state agencies can be normatively represented in a conceptual scheme. This arrangement is depicted in Figure 2.





Notes:

1. Programs are selected for review on a cyclical or "triggered" basis. Cyclical patterns are based on varying recurring time frames. "Triggered" reviews occur due to response to results from productivity measures or interest on the part of the state legislature.
2. As programs are selected, some states use a peer review process as a precursor to the full review process. This process helps in the data collection phase.
3. Program reviews take a variety of forms. They may be done in conjunction with self-studies or accreditation visits. The institution, state agency, or external consultants may conduct them.
4. May be formal or informal. Programs that are approved conditionally are usually given a specific period of time to correct shortcomings. The programs are monitored and additional reviews may be conducted to determine the program's fate.
5. May lead to modification, consolidation, or elimination.

Figure 2. State Agency Academic Program Review Process Model

This conceptual scheme suggests three generalizations about academic program review processes. First, some external agent such as the state legislature or state agency selects programs for review. The review may be triggered by a concern such as productivity or mission-related matters. Second, institutions are requested to take certain actions such as conducting self-studies of program effectiveness. Third, state agencies take certain actions such as forming agency review committees or other structures which may include internal or external consultants and/or representatives from accrediting agencies to determine a program's approval status. Reviews, where conducted, often are focused on disciplines (or discipline clusters) or on broad categories such as degree level programs.

Academic program review practices can be placed in one of three general approaches:

Independent Institutional Review. In this approach, the state agency delegates the authority to conduct program reviews to the institution. The state agency does not exercise any supervision or audit of the processes (e.g., Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, and New Jersey).

Interdependent Institutional Review. In this approach, the institution conducts the program review on a regular basis but does so under the guidance and audit of the state agency. The institution determines the review processes and criteria to be used consistent with

the context and characteristics of the institution. The institution submits its program review report to the state agency according to an annual or cyclical state-determined plan. Program review reports conducted in this manner often include:

- Descriptive program information,
- Year of last program review,
- Documentation of continuing need,
- Assessment information related to expected student learning outcomes and the achievement of the program's objectives,
- Plans to improve the quality and productivity of the program, and
- Program productivity indicators.

Based on the information that the institution provides the state agency will make recommendations to modify, consolidate, or eliminate the program(s) (e.g., Hawaii, Kansas, and Montana).

State-Mandated Review. In this approach, the state agency determines the procedures and criteria of the program review, and conducts or commissions the review of the selected programs within the state system. The state agency staff will participate in the review process. System wide (lateral) program review of similar programs within the state may be carried out at the same time as can be seen in Illinois. The state agency also may conduct post-audit reviews of new programs following the graduation of the first class using pre-determined criteria (e.g., Georgia and North Dakota).

Variations on these program review approaches include the use of productivity reviews (normally triggered by evidence of below standard efficacy) and cyclical reviews. When productivity reviews are incorporated into the process, productivity indicators (such as credit hours, course enrollments, number of majors, number of degrees awarded, cost, and related information) are examined annually as reported by the institution. The state agency identifies low productivity and/or duplicative programs and takes action based on their determinations (e.g., Virginia and New Hampshire). Sometimes when reviews are triggered in this manner, the state agency reviews all similar programs in the state (e.g., Montana). When cyclical reviews are conducted, all programs are examined on some pre-determined schedule such as once each 3, 5, 7, or 10 years (e.g., South Carolina and Illinois).

External consultants may be used as a complement with any of the generalized approaches to program review. External consultants form an advisory committee to participate directly in the program review process. On-site visitations may be performed. Most states require the use of external consultants. External consultants may be selected from several groups of experts:

1. External evaluators: Qualified professionals selected from in-state or out-of state to provide objectivity and expertise.
2. Representatives from peer institutions with similar programs: Selected from similar institutions with similar programs to permit

informed exchange and to establish comparable standards (e.g., Georgia and Wisconsin).

3. Accreditation agencies: Representatives from specialized and regional accreditation recognized by the state agency may be used in the reviews (e.g., Montana and Georgia).
4. Representatives from state agencies of elementary and secondary education: Selected to achieve better linkage among the different educational levels.
5. Local lay people and other interested parties: Selected to address societal and occupational needs.

The consultants and/or representatives comment upon the quality of the program, resources available to the program, outcomes of the program, program costs, and other factors. An external review report is provided on the findings and each institution may have the opportunity to review the report and make comments. The final report and comments of the institution are reviewed by the state agency where further action may be taken.

The generalized academic program review approaches may occur in combination with one another and may be combined with the use of external consultants. Some of these combinations may be described as follows:

- Example 1 features interdependent and state-mandated reviews with the use of external consultants (e.g., Arizona, Wisconsin, and Idaho).
- Example 2 features interdependent review and the use of consultants (e.g., Washington and Georgia).
- Example 3 features independent review and the use of external consultants (e.g., Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, and New Jersey).
- Example 4 features state-mandated review characterized by productivity review approaches or cyclical state-mandated reviews in combination with the use of external consultants (e.g., Virginia and West Virginia).
- Example 5 features independent review under state agency guidelines (e.g., New Hampshire).

Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses of Program Review Processes by States

Strengths and weaknesses of program review practices may vary according to the model or approach chosen; however, they may be characterized generally as follows:

Strengths of Program Review Practices

- Provides an on-going quality assurance check
- Even when done on an irregular basis, the process serves as an incentive to ensure quality at the institutional level
- When outside reviewers are used, a greater measure of

objectivity can be obtained

Weaknesses of Program Review Practices

- Institutions may focus on the review process and do little with the results
- Reviews are not done with great enough frequency to provide real quality control
- Process is time consuming
- Process is expensive

Summary of Program Approval and Review Practices by States

Program approval and program review can be seen as part of the integrated components of quality assurance practices within a state system of higher education. In this view, program approval is the initial and authorizing stage of program quality assurance and program review is a continuation and revalidation of the approval process.
The objectives of program approval and program review are the same: ensure mission compatibility, maintain academic standards, assure continuing improvement of academic programs, and guarantee accountability of academic programs. Issues in both program approval and program review also are the same: mission compatibility, need, program structure, availability of resources (financing, faculty and staff, facilities, technology, etc.), and quality assurance.

Program approval and program review processes can be both internal and external, that is, they can be carried out both within the institutions themselves and/or by external agents. External agents may include the state agency, external consultants, peer institutions, accreditation agencies, and other interested parties.

Internal program approval and program review can best safeguard the institution's autonomy, integrate the processes with the institutional self-improvement efforts, be more flexible, and boost the morale of the faculty and administrators of institutions. However, internal program approval tends not to provide sufficient stimulation and motivation for improvement. External program approval and review procedures are part of the internal program operating processes, exercise outside monitoring, challenge existing program development notions, ensure maximum objectivity and expertise, and encourage the exchange of good practices. However, external review approaches may intrude on institutional autonomy and bring extra financial and reporting burdens to the institutions.
Distinctions between program approval and review practices between undergraduate and graduate programs cannot be clearly drawn from this study. Some states clearly are more concerned with one level of academic program than the other, but no systematic pattern in these concerns was evident from the data.

Program Approval and Review Practices by Foreign Counties and Regions

Program approval and review practices of Australia, Canada, England, Germany (Lower Saxony), Hong Kong, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Scotland are summarized as a single practice. In these international practices, program approval and program review often are intertwined and are called quality assurance.

Quality assurance approaches in international locations are similar to practices in the United States in many respects. Three general models are evident:

1. Self-regulating (regulation by the institution or provider of the educational program), as seen in Canada where universities have the authority and responsibility for quality assurance.
2. Externally regulated (regulation by an external agency), as seen in Australia. The federal government of Australia plays a direct and intrusive role in educational policy.
3. A combination of the two (mixed or collaborative regulation), as seen in most of the countries and regions, such as in England, Scotland, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Germany (Lower Saxony), and New Zealand, though the degree of the external control varies to a great extent. For example, in England and Scotland, quality assurance is more government-driven than in the Netherlands where the institutions are delegated more autonomy. This approach features institutional self-evaluation and cyclical review conducted by a quality assurance agency.

Distinctive Features of Program Approval and Review Practices in Foreign Counties and Regions

- Institutional self-regulation (self-study) is combined with external quality assurance agency review or audit. The quality assurance agency ensures that the institutions implement their own quality assurance procedures effectively.
- The institution may either design its own quality assurance procedures or adopt a formal quality assurance policy determined by the quality assurance agency or by the government. Adopting the formal quality assurance policy helps to emphasize system priorities and ensures consistency and comprehensiveness of comments and judgement of external reviewers across the system.
- External reviewers (assessors) play a very important role to ensure objectivity and expertise, promote the exchange of good practices, and respond to the needs of the society. In some countries, external reviewers are draw from foreign countries (e.g., Hong Kong and the Netherlands), from industry (e.g., the Netherlands), and from the local lay people (e.g., Hong Kong). External reviewers may receive training from the quality assurance agency before visiting institutions under review (e.g., Scotland).
- In some countries, quality assurance initiatives are very extensive, including an assessment of institutional teaching and learning practices of all academic programs and an assessment of the research skills and training of junior academic staff (e.g.,

United Kingdom and Germany).

- Quality assurance results are scored (e.g., United Kingdom), ranked (e.g., the Netherlands) or published (e.g., United Kingdom) in some countries. Decision-making, such as funding and program elimination, is based on these scores or ranks.
- On-site visits involve meetings with groups of faculty, students, administrative staff, and those responsible for running support services. Time is spent in direct observation of teaching and learning.
- To reduce the administration burden, participants are encouraged to share proposals, databases, and trend analyses electronically (e.g., New Zealand).

Discussion

According to Barak (1998), more than half of the 50 states are considering deregulation or decentralization of program approval and review practices. This study confirmed a widespread interest in finding alternatives to current practices that still meet statutory or policy requirements.

Academic program approval and review procedures generally are conducted to address program quality and program productivity at the institutional level. Statewide concerns include access and capacity, quality, occupational supply and demand, and program costs and institutional productivity. Interest in decentralization or deregulation of academic program approval and review policies in a context of accountability was evident in state agencies though most demonstrated this interest only in their future plans.

Evidence from this study suggested that overall program approval and review practice in 50 states and eight foreign countries and regions can be distilled into three conceptual models for practice: .

- State Regulatory Model. A centralized model for quality control characterized by development and application of centralized regulatory requirements for program approval and review by state-level agency.
- Collaboration Model. A consolidated model for institution and state agency cooperation characterized by jointly developed and administered program approval and review procedures by institution and state agency.
- Accreditation Model. A decentralized standards-based model characterized by the development and application of standards and guidelines for program approval and review and by cyclical audit by state and consulting agents from outside the institution.

The State Regulatory Model and Collaboration Model are derived from practices in the 50 states. The Accreditation Model primarily is used in foreign countries and regions, though aspects of accreditation are used in program review practices in this country.These models can be depicted along a continuum of state control as shown in Figure 3.

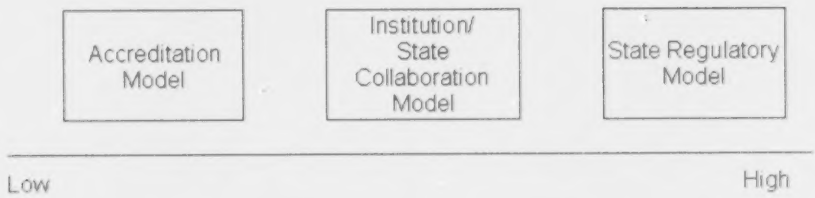


Figure 3. Relationship of Program Evaluation Models to State Agency Control

Analysis of information from this study was used to formulate two suggested alternative models for consideration by SCHEV--the Quality Assurance Audit Model (see Figure 4) and the Modified Collaboration Model (see Figures 5 and 6).

The Quality Assurance Audit Model is a decentralized model of program approval and review characterized by:

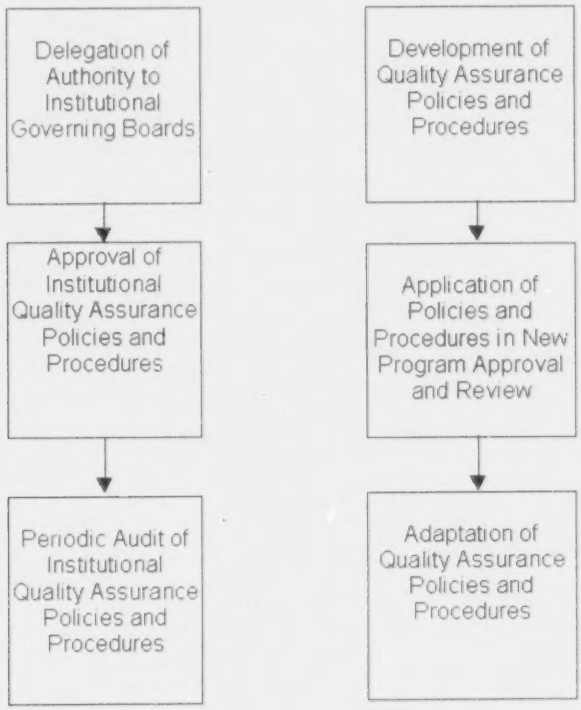

Delegation of Authority to Institutional Governing Boards
Approval of Institutional Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures
Periodic Audit of Institutional Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures
Development of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures
Application of Policies and Procedures in New Program Approval and Review
Adaptation of Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

Figure 4. Quality Assurance Audit Model of Program Approval and Review

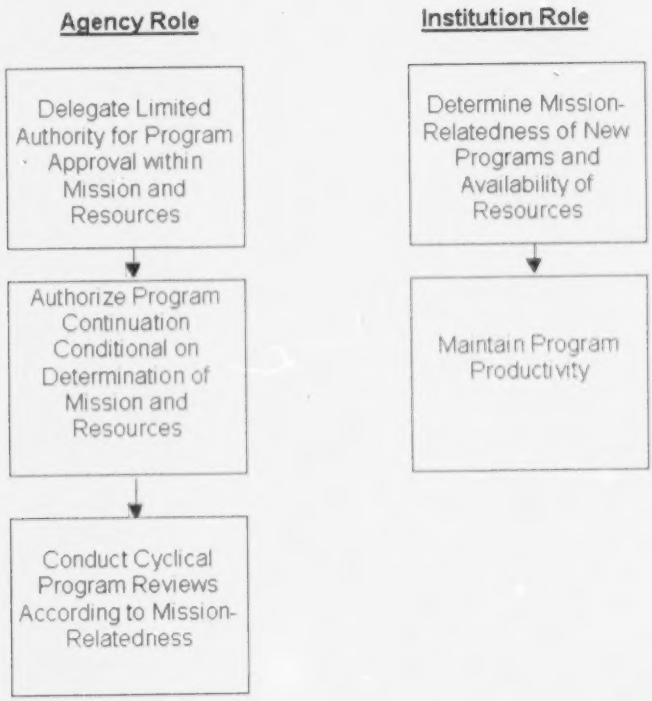

Agency Role
Institution Role
Delegate Limited Authority for Program Approval within Mission and Resources
Authorize Program Continuation Conditional on Determination of Mission and Resources
Conduct Cyclical Program Reviews According to Mission-Relatedness
Determine Mission-Relatedness of New Programs and Availability of Resources
Maintain Program Productivity

Figure 5. Modified Institution/State Collaboration Model

- Delegation of appropriate state agency authority to institutional governing boards,
- Development and application of institutional-level quality assurance policies and procedures (referring to policies and practices that include quality, duplication, and productivity issues), and
- Cyclical or triggered state-level audit of these policies and procedures.
- The Modified Collaboration Model is a centralized model of program approval and review characterized by:
- Shared institution and state-level oversight authority,
- Institutional-level program approval by classification according to mission relatedness (within mission, related to mission, outside of mission) and the requirement for new resources, and
- Cyclical reviews by state-level agency (for example, at five-year intervals) depending upon classification of initial approval.

Figure 6. Program Approval and Review Status within the Modified Institution/State Collaboration Model

The degree of centralization among the five models, those that represent current practice and those proposed as alternatives, can be depicted as shown in Figure 7 on the continuum of state agency control.

Both alternative models are attractive for different reasons relative to state interests in deregulation or decentralization of program approval and review practices. The Quality Assurance Audit Model places the agency in a policy/coordination role that enables the agency staff to provide broad oversight for the process of quality assurance. The state agency would be integrally involved in process development and management but would leave the implementation of the process to its respective institutions.

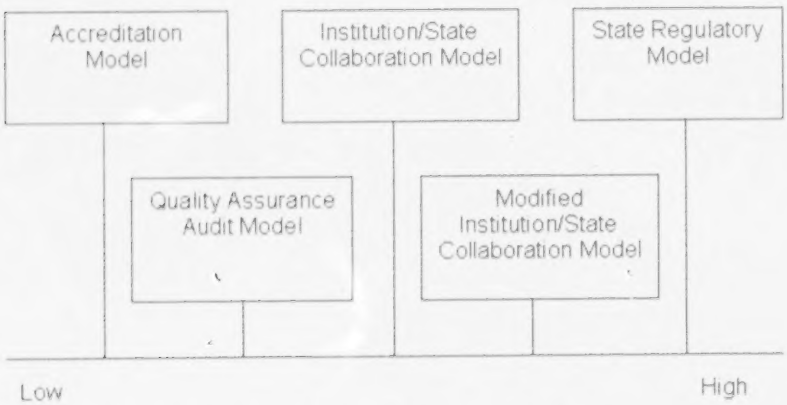


Figure 7. Level of State Agency Control in Five Program Evaluation Models

The most apparent disadvantages of the Quality Assurance Audit Model is that too much authority and control are delegated to the

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institutions (although this runs counter to stated interests in deregulation or decentralization). However, using a periodic system-wide audit of program offerings noting year-to-year changes might serve as an excellent way to monitor institutional activity. Self-study reports and accreditation visits, processes already in place in most public institutions, would provide additional information on institutional decision making in the area of program approval and review.

The Modified Collaboration Model is attractive because it stratifies the approval and review process based on two critical factors--mission and cost. The model prescribes that additional attention be given to programs that require supplementary resources and fall outside an institution's current mission--the areas of greatest risk to the institution and the state. At the same time, however, institutions building new mission-related programs by reallocating existing resources receive additional control and authority. The disadvantage in this process is that risk-taking and innovation may be reduced if institutions act to avoid the more rigorous reviews that come with programs that may fall outside their current mission or require new resources.

Implications

State agencies that wish to modify their current academic program approval and program review practices to accomplish goals of deregulation or decentralization in an environment of accountability may find policy alternatives suitable to accomplish the goal. Most current practices currently are reasonably well portrayed in either the State Regulatory Model or the Collaboration Model. As currently practiced, however, neither of these models accomplish the goals of deregulation or decentralization very well.

Two alternative models to current practice were developed as part of this study. These new models, when appropriately constructed on policies consistent with the applicable statutory requirements, can release state agencies from burdensome practices without relinquishing responsibility or diminishing accountability. Both the Quality Assurance Audit Model and the Modified Collaboration Model may serve this purpose although clearly the Quality Assurance Audit Model moves the agencies further from current practice than does the Modified Collaboration Model.

States coordinating and governing boards across the country are struggling to find new, more effective ways of dealing with program approval and program review. This synthesis of current practice, along with the two alternative models suggested here, may prove helpful as these discussions continue.

Notes

1. Special thanks are due to Virginia Tech doctoral students Chunmei Zhao, Michael Perry, and Miya Simpson who assisted in all phases of the research for this project.

2. A copy of the complete study report and a complete bibliography of materials used for the original study is available at: http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v7n23/v7n23.pdf

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Autonomia Universitária no Brasil: Uma Utopia?

Maria de Lourdes de Albuquerque Fávero

Resumen
El objetivo de este trabajo es hacer un recorrido histórico por las distintas etapas por las que ha pasado la autonomía universitaria brasileña. La revisión comprende desde 1931, en que la Reforma de la Enseñanza Superior promovida por el Ministro Francisco Campos concede "autonomía relativa" a la universidad, hasta la actualidad. El artículo relaciona las modalidades históricas de la autonomía universitaria en Brasil con los proyectos nacionales y con las formas de régimen político que ha tenido ese país en el período considerado. El trabajo concluye con una reflexión sobre las tareas pendientes para reforzar la autonomía universitaria brasileña ante los desafíos del presente.

Abstract
The purpose of this work is to trace the historical stages through which university autonomy in Brazil has evolved. It begins with 1931 when Minister Francisco Campos conceded "relative autonomy" to the universities and describes developments to the present day. The history of autonomy in Brazilian universities is related to various political regimes and national movements through which Brazil has passed in the last 70 years. Final thoughts on the the challenges facing academic autonomy in present-day Brazil are presented.

Preliminares

As reflexões que vamos desenvolver estão centradas no princípio da autonomia universitária, reconhecido como uma das questões nucleares da Universidade no Brasil. É em torno dela que muitas outras se concentram. A história das instituições universitárias no País permite reconhecer que a autonomia tem sido negada, com freqüência, por meio de dispositivos legais ou de mecanismos de controle e contenção. Tal questão, entre nós é anterior até mesmo à criação da primeira universidade oficial (Moacyr, 1942: 71-88 e Cunha, 1986). O termo aparece na legislação de ensino, pela primeira vez, em 1911, na Reforma Rivadávia Corrêa (Decreto nº 8.659). Essa temática é levantada em resposta a um movimento de contenção do crescimento das inscrições nas faculdades, propiciada pelo ingresso irrestrito dos egressos das escolas secundárias, tanto nas oficiais como nas privadas.

O resultado não surtiu os efeitos esperados. Se, por um lado, reduziu o número de estudantes que entravam nas instituições oficiais, obrigados a um exame de ingresso, por outro, o mesmo não vai ocorrer com as chamadas "escolas livres" que, apoiando-se no princípio de

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autonomia garantido por decreto, proporcionavam todas as facilidades aos candidatos. Em decorrência, em 1915, o termo autonomia foi suprimido pela Reforma Carlos Maximiliano (Decreto nº 11.530) que reorganizou o ensino secundário e superior do País. As instituições de ensino superior públicas perderam, entre outras prerrogativas, o direito de eleger seus dirigentes, que passaram a ser nomeados livremente pelo Presidente da República dentre os professores catedráticos efetivos ou jubilados.

Apoiado na Reforma de 1915, o Governo Federal cria, em 1920, através do Decreto nº 14.343, a primeira instituição universitária no País, a Universidade do Rio de Janeiro, sendo o reitor e os diretores das unidades nomeados pelo Presidente da República. O controle sobre as universidades federais, a partir daí, torna-se cada vez mais explícito. Com a Reforma do Ensino Superior promovida pelo Ministro Francisco Campos, em 1931, um ponto bastante acentuado é a concessão da autonomia relativa à universidade, como uma preparação para a autonomia plena. Apesar da justificativa de não ser possível, naquele momento, conceder-lhes "autonomia plena", tanto no plano didático, como no administrativo, a questão ficou, a rigor, em aberto.

Análise mais cuidadosa da exposição de motivos que acompanha os decretos números 19.851, que expede o Estatuto das Universidades Brasileiras e o 19.852, que dispõe sobre a Reorganização da Universidade do Rio de Janeiro (URJ), evidencia certa ambigüidade: ora a autonomia é assegurada à universidade, ora ela é admitida de modo restrito, alternando aberturas momentâneas e fechamentos, o que não deixa de ser uma forma de controle e centralização. Isso se torna claro na organização dos currículos das instituições de ensino superior (IES). Quanto à autonomia administrativa, apresenta-se também limitada: a escolha de reitores, diretores de unidades e membros do Conselho Técnico Administrativo (CTA) é feita pelo Governo, mediante lista tríplice.

Com essa reforma, a Universidade do Rio de Janeiro é instada e efetuar sua primeira reorganização. Seus estatutos são reformulados para poderem adequar-se aos dispositivos dos. decretos antes mencionados. E, em julho de 1937, ela é reorganizada pela segunda vez, havendo, por parte do Governo Central, a preocupação de imprimir-lhe caráter nacional, dando-lhe a denominação de Universidade do Brasil (UB). Entre as propostas apresentadas em plano federal, desde 1935, em relação a essa Universidade uma delas é bastante expressiva: "deve a universidade federal constituir o mais sólido reduto, onde se resguardem as tradições, se firmem os princípios, se assinalem as diretrizes, que assegurem à nação brasileira a continuidade do progresso, o equilíbrio e a liberdade". A seguir, afirma-se: "A semelhante universidade, que assim se propõe exercer tamanha influência nacional, cabe bem a denominação de Universidade do Brasil" (MESP, 1935: 31). Embora, desde 1935, fosse justificada a concepção da Universidade do Brasil como "modelo padrão", o que se verifica é que, a partir de 1937, essa instituição passa a ser o "modelo outorgado" pelo governo central para as demais universidades e cursos superiores no País.

As diretrizes ideológicas que vão nortear a educação durante o

Estado Novo (1937-45) são pautadas por caráter fortemente centralizador e autoritário, o que traz sérios problemas para as instituições universitárias., no País. No período, as universidades se tornam vítimas de uma organização monolítica do Estado, sem qualquer autonomia. Há uma exacerbada centralização de todos os serviços, decorrendo daí a concepção de que o processo educativo poderia ser objeto de estrito controle legal. Com essa orientação, o Governo chama para si, como veremos a seguir no caso da UB, o pleno direito de designar em comissão os dirigentes universitários. Assim, tanto o reitor como os diretores de unidades são escolhidos pelo Presidente, dentre os respectivos catedráticos.

Após o Estado Novo, em 1945, e ainda durante o Governo Provisório, a Universidade do Brasil passa a gozar de autonomia administrativa, financeira e disciplinar, mediante o decreto nº 8.393/45. O reitor volta a ser escolhido pelo Presidente da República mediante lista tríplice, tal como estava disposto na Reforma de 1931. Quanto aos diretores de unidades, sua nomeação passa a ser feita pelo reitor, com prévia autorização do Presidente da República, obtida por intermédio do Ministério da Educação, sendo a escolha feita a partir de lista tríplice organizada pela respectiva congregação.

Com a Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional, de 1961 (Lei nº 4.024), fica estabelecido, em termos gerais, que as universidades gozarão de autonomia administrativa, financeira, didática e disciplinar. Todavia, é importante lembrar que, os dispositivos contidos no projeto original, que definiam os tipos de autonomia, foram vetados. Mas a própria lei vai se encarregar de restringir a autonomia concedida às universidades, quando prescreve, entre as atribuições do Conselho Federal de Educação, "aprovar estatutos das universidades e promover sindicâncias por meio de comissões especiais em quaisquer estabelecimento de ensino superior, tendo em vista o fiel cumprimento desta lei". Merece ser observado ainda que, se tal dispositivo não teve implicações mais significativas até o golpe militar de 1964; a partir daí, esse dispositivo foi aplicado, em alguns casos, de forma bastante discricionária.

Em 1964, o regime militar implantado teve como uma de suas preocupações básicas modernizar a universidade. Os Decretos-Leis números 53/66 e 252/67 foram o ponto de partida para medidas mais amplas, no sentido de modernização das instituições de ensino superior (IES). Em função desses dispositivos, as universidades federais tiveram de reformular os estatutos, determinando significativas modificações em sua estrutura interna de poder. Somente em 1968, a Reforma Universitária veio a consolidar-se, com a Lei nº 5.540, de 28 de novembro daquele ano. Análise cuidadosa dessa Lei mostra que, ao mesmo tempo que reconhece o princípio de autonomia didático-científica, disciplinar, administrativa e financeira da universidade, ela o limita. Tal limitação é fortemente reforçada por atos de exceção baixados pelo governo militar, sobretudo através do Ato Institucional n.º 5 (AI-5), de 13 de dezembro de 1968, e do Decreto-Lei nº 477, de fevereiro de 1969, com base no § 1? desse Ato. Nesse dispositivo, o governo militar define as infrações disciplinares praticadas por professores, alunos e funcionários ou empregados de

estabelecimentos públicos ou particulares e as medidas a serem adotadas nos diversos casos.

Complementando as determinações desse Decreto-Lei, medidas foram emitidas pelo Governo, tais como: as Portarias Ministeriais números 149/69 e 3.525/70. Tais medidas contribuíram ainda mais para o processo de paralisia dos membros das instituições universitárias, abrindo espaço para ações de caráter persecutório de dirigentes universitários em relação a seus subordinados.

Da legislação ordinária referente ao ensino superior, promulgada a partir da Emenda Constitucional nº 1/69, merece destaque a Lei nº 6.420, de 3 de junho de 1977, que altera o art. 16 da Lei nº 5.540/68, determinando a apresentação de listas sêxtuplas para a escolha dos dirigentes das escolas oficiais. No caso das universidades federais organizadas sob a forma de autarquias, o Reitor e o Vice-Reitor passam a ser nomeados pelo Presidente da República, a partir de uma lista elaborada por uma Colégio Eleitoral, constituído, em geral, pelos Conselhos Universitários, de Ensino e Pesquisa e de Curadores. Em alguns casos, a elaboração dessa lista apresenta-se marcada por interesses estranhos à universidade, resultado de um processo político manipulado pela reitoria. Em outros, tal lista serve para garantir ao poder instituído externo, de forma não clara, a inclusão e/ou escolha de nomes de sua preferência.

Quanto às fundações universitárias públicas, a partir da Lei nº 6.733/79, elas não detêm qualquer forma de autonomia para escolher seus dirigentes. Reitor e Vice-Reitor são escolhidos pelo Presidente da República sem a exigência de lista sêxtupla, bem como os membros do Conselho Diretor da Universidade. Assim, os cargos de direção passam a ser cargos de confiança.

Como foi mencionado antes, importa lembrar também que na história das instituições universitárias no País, não é a primeira vez que o Poder Central chama a si o pleno direito de designar em comissão os dirigentes de universidades públicas. Um pouco antes de ser instalado o Estado Novo, a Lei nº 452, de 5 de julho de 1937, reorganiza a Universidade do Rio de Janeiro e institui a Universidade do Brasil como modelo padrão para as demais universidades. O art. 27 dessa Lei estabelece que tanto o Reitor, como os Diretores dos estabelecimentos de ensino deveriam ser escolhidos pelo Presidente da República, dentre os respectivos catedráticos, e nomeados em comissão. Observamos que essa forma de escolha de dirigentes universitários, adotada em um momento de grande centralização e autoritarismo no Brasil, e executada durante o Estado Novo, é retomada três décadas mais tarde pela Comissão Meira Mattos. Ao analisar a "crise de autoridade do sistema educacional brasileiro", entre outras recomendações, a Comissão propõe: "a alteração do atual sistema de nomeação de Reitores das Universidades e Diretores de Estabelecimentos de Ensino Superior, atribuindo ao Presidente da República o poder de preencher tais cargos, independentemente da indicação das respectivas universidades ou congregações". Após doze anos, esse procedimento passa a ser aplicado nas fundações universitárias públicas, em decorrência da Lei nº 6.733/79 (Sguissardi, 1993).

Durante o regime militar, a gravidade do que acontece em relação à universidade não está expressa claramente nos dispositivos legais, apesar de alguns deles, como o Decreto- Lei nº 477/69 ser demasiado contundente. A gravidade se expressava no regime de terror e de silêncio a que foram submetidas a universidade e a sociedade. Exemplo típico dessa situação foi a criação e a manutenção das "assessorias de segurança" dentro das universidades, a fim de impedir que mecanismos democráticos, mesmo quando previstos em lei, pudessem ser usados de forma efetiva, para que a "perfeita ordem" fosse garantida e a "paz" pudesse reinar. Tais "assessorias" só foram totalmente extintas, nas universidades públicas federais, em 1985.

Cabe observar, ainda, que a reforma contribuiu para fortalecer o processo de concentração de poder autoritário dentro das instituições universitárias, através de mecanismos de poder, monopolizados, em boa parte, por facções de antigas cúpulas que temiam um processo de radicalização e de contestação contra o regime. Tal situação recrudesce e adquire sua expressão máxima, quando o mecanismo de eleição de dirigentes das universidades públicas é alterado. Refirimo-nos à mudança da lista tríplice pela lista sêxtupla, pela qual o controle por parte de eleitores e da comunidade acadêmica se torna mais difícil, aumentando a possibilidade de inclusão de pessoal de confiança ou favorecendo as medidas do poder estabelecido (Cunha, 1986). É pertinente recordar que, se a década de 70 ficou marcada pela desmobilização estudantil ? resultado dos anos de autoritarismo ?, foi no final dela que surgiu o movimento docente, caracterizado nos anos 60 como um coletivo ausente, ou seja, até aquele momento, os docentes não se fazem sentir como uma força organizada. Somente mais tarde começaram a lutar de forma solidária em defesa do processo de democratização das universidades e de sua autonomia.

No limiar dos anos 80, reinicia-se no País a luta pela redemocratização da sociedade e, como parte dela, a da universidade. Há, também, para significativo número de professores, consciência de que alguns dos problemas relevantes da universidade são o do poder e o da tomada de decisões, na relação entre representantes e representados, governantes (Estado, mantenedoras) e governados. Assim sendo, um projeto alternativo de reforma das universidades para surtir efeito teria de estar vinculado a um projeto de democratização da sociedade. Entre as questões que perpassam as discussões, colocam-se a autonomia acadêmica, científica e administrativa da universidade, bem como a crescente desobrigação do Estado em relação à escola pública. Com tais preocupações, representantes das associações de docentes do Rio de Janeiro elaboram uma proposta, que foi apresentada na Reunião Anual da SBPC -Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciência, realizada em Fortaleza, em julho de 1979. Todavia, merece registro que, enquanto os docentes discutiam uma proposta sobre a reforma da universidade, o Governo, dispensando a participação da comunidade acadêmica, cria uma Comissão Interministerial para examinar três anteprojetos: autarquia de regime especial; escolha e nomeação de dirigentes; e a reestruturação da carreira do magistério superior. Diante da reação da comunidade acadêmica, os dois primeiros foram engavetados, ainda na

administração do Ministro Eduardo Portela, na Pasta da Educação. O terceiro foi sancionado em dezembro de 1980, como desfecho de uma greve nacional de docentes das federais, pelo então Ministro da Educação, o General Rubem Ludwig. A partir da chamada "Nova República", outras medidas foram adotadas em relação às instituições universitárias. Em março de 1985, é instituída a Comissão Nacional para a Reformulação da Educação Superior. No Relatório Final dessa Comissão percebe-se que a idéia de autonomia permeia todo o documento. Vale registrar, no entanto, que, se sob alguns aspectos houve avanços nas propostas da Comissão em relação à autonomia e à democratização, isso não se dá por acaso: é fruto de anos de luta da comunidade acadêmica como um todo e do movimento docente em particular, que, desde 1979, juntamente com outras entidades, organizam-se para reivindicar seus direitos, enfrentando, em alguns casos e momentos, o arbítrio e o autoritarismo do poder constituído (Fávero, 1994, pp. 149-77).

Com a finalidade de repensar e melhor adequar as propostas da Comissão Nacional, contidas no seu *Relatório Final*, é criado, no MEC, em fevereiro de 1986, o *Grupo Executivo para a Reformulação da Educação Superior* (GERES). Em relação à autonomia da universidade, o GERES não lhe assegura esse princípio, por não haver autonomia sem democratização da universidade.

Arrematando este item, observamos ainda que a autonomia universitária quando mal compreendida poderá contribuir não apenas para reforçar a tutela estatal, mas também interesses corporativos existentes no interior da universidade.

O princípio de autonomia na Constituição de 1988 e na atual Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação

A Constituição Federal de 1988 consagrou a autonomia universitária protegida pelo seu art. 207 que dispõe: "As universidades gozam de autonomia didático-científica, administrativa e de gestão financeira e patrimonial, e obedecerão ao princípio de indissociabilidade entre ensino, pesquisa e extensão".

Importa observar a precisão dos termos: "as universidades gozam de autonomia (...) e obedecerão ao princípio (...)". Os verbos são imperativos. Em sua acepção própria, o vocábulo princípio traduz a idéia "de origem, começo, causa primária" (Ferreira, 1986: 1393). E esta é a idéia que está presente na expressão "princípio de autonomia universitária" a designar não um princípio constitucional ou uma norma constitucional de princípio--norma programática-- mas um princípio universitário, ou mesmo de "direito educacional" por ser inerente à atividade universitária, e não à ordem jurídica, no sentido de orientação axiológica para a compreensão do sistema jurídico nacional" (Ranieri, 1994: 100). Assim entendida, a autonomia é causa primária da atividade universitária e é neste sentido que deve ser compreendida a expressão "princípio de autonomia".

É pertinente lembrar que a expressão *entidade autônoma* pertence ao direito público interno. Governa-se por si própria internamente, mas externamente tem seus limites traçados pela Constituição, ou seja, pelo modo de sua participação política no

conjunto de uma nação soberana. Chamamos atenção ainda para o fato de que, apesar de a Constituição deixar claro que a Universidade goza de todos os atributos propostos à autonomia, em momento algum é dito que ela goza de autonomia política, por não ser ela nem uma nação, nem um Estado (Cury, 1991: 27). A autonomia, tal como dispõe o art. 207, é um modo de ser institucional e exige liberdade para a universidade se autodeterminar. Esse artigo, no entanto, não pode ser analisado isoladamente, uma vez que a Constituição tem que ser vista na seu todo e interpretada de maneira sistemática. Assim, não podemos discutir esse artigo sem relacioná-lo com outros dispositivos constitucionais, tais como: o art. 212 que trata dos recursos públicos destinados ao ensino público e privado e o 206 que dispõe sobre a liberdade de aprender, de ensinar, de pesquisar e de divulgar o pensamento e o saber, como princípios basilares do ensino (Barracho,1996, pp. 1-2). (Note 1)

Entendida nessa perspectiva, a *autonomia didático- científica* implica liberdade da universidade para: a) estabelecer seus objetivos, organizando o ensino, a pesquisa e a extensão sem quaisquer restrições doutrinárias ou políticas de graduação e pós-graduação e outros a serem realizados sob sua responsabilidade; b) definir linhas de pesquisa; c) criar, organizar, modificar e extinguir cursos; d) elaborar o calendário escolar e o regime de trabalho didático; e) fixar critérios e normas de seleção, admissão, promoção e transferência de alunos e f) outorgar graus, diplomas, certificados e outros títulos acadêmicos. Na mesma linha, do ponto de vista *administrativo*, as universidades têm plena liberdade de: a) organizar-se internamente estabelecendo suas instâncias decisórias, na forma que lhes aprouver; b) elaborar e reformular seus estatutos e regimentos; c) estabelecer seu quadro de pessoal docente e técnico-administrativo, de acordo com seu planejamento didático-científico.

A terceira dimensão refere-se à *autonomia de gestão financeira e patrimonial*. Na acepção mais corrente, gerir significa "ter gerência sobre; administrar, dirigir, reger, gerenciar (Ferreira, 1986, p. 848), o que implica poder elaborar, executar e reestruturar os orçamentos; constituir patrimônio e dele dispor. No caso das universidades públicas significa: a) outorgar competência à universidade para elaborar seu orçamento e executar suas despesas, a partir de suas unidades básicas, submetendo-as à aprovação dos colegiados superiores; b) receber os recursos que o Poder Público é obrigado a repassar-lhe para o pagamento de pessoal, despesas de capital e outros custeios; c) administrar os rendimentos próprios de seu patrimônio e deles dispor, na forma de seu estatuto; d) receber heranças, legados e cooperação financeira resultante de convênios com entidades públicas e privada; e) realizar contratos referentes a obras, compras, alienação ou concessão, de acordo com os procedimentos administrativos de licitação. Do exposto, pode-se inferir que, se por um lado nunca houve no País a autonomia universitária em sentido pleno, apesar de proclamada na Constituição e nos documentos oficiais, por outro, observa-se que existe, de forma cada vez mais consciente, uma luta pela construção efetiva dessa autonomia, por parte de entidades, associações científicas e grupos organizados dentro e fora das universidades. Todavia, a Lei

de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDB), que foi sancionada em dezembro de 1996, não contempla esses anseios.

Leitura atenta dessa lei não deixa claro que a autonomia da universidade visa garantir a liberdade de produção e transmissão do conhecimento, como também a autogestão de seus recursos para o atendimento de suas finalidades e que a autonomia administrativa, de gestão financeira e patrimonial decorrem e estão subordinadas à autonomia didático-científica como meios de garantir a sua efetividade.

Face ao exposto, o que se faz necessário agora é um trabalho em defesa dos princípios adotados pela Constituição e o que se procurou construir durante a tramitação da Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional. Apoiando-nos em colocações de Marilena Chaui, questionamos: "deve a universidade pública gozar de autonomia acadêmica para definir suas atividades e o modo de realizá-las?" (...) É a universidade que, autonomamente, decide em que, como e quando relacionar-se com as empresas ou ao contrário?" Não se trata, como bem demonstra essa autora, "de sacralizar nem satanizar os interesses das corporações empresariais, nem os das corporações universitárias, mas de indagar se a discussão sobre a universidade pública democrática deve ser feita no campo dos interesses ou no dos direitos. Se no dos interesses é preciso provar que uns são mais legítimos que outros; se no dos direitos, então a autonomia universitária é pré-condição para definir campos de interesses" (Chauí, 1995, p. 61).

Análise cuidadosa do último documento do Ministério de Educação, sobre "Autonomia Universitária (MEC,1999), provavelmente levará a entender que, no caso das universidades públicas, como bem assinala Chauí, "de fato, a autonomia universitária se reduz à gestão de receitas e despesas, de acordo com o contrato de gestão pelo qual o Estado estabelece metas e indicadores de desempenho que determinam a renovação ou não do contrato. A autonomia significa, portanto, gerenciamento empresarial da instituição e prevê que, para cumprir as metas e alcançar os indicadores impostos pelo contrato de gestão, a universidade tem "autonomia" para "captar recursos de outras fontes fazendo parcerias com as empresas privadas". Na linguagem do Ministério da Educação a "flexibilização é o corolário da autonomia" (Chauí, 1999: 3). Nessa perspectiva, "a posição da universidade no setor de prestação de serviços confere um sentido bastante determinado à idéia de autonomia universitária e introduz termos como qualidade universitária, avaliação universitária e flexibilização universitária" (Ibid.).

No que tange às instituições públicas, o Documento do MEC, *Fundamentos para uma Lei que regule a autonomia das universidades federais*...reduz a gestão de receitas e despesas de acordo com o contrato de gestão ? como já assinalado ?, segundo o qual o Estado estabelece metas e indicadores. De forma explícita isso aparece, nesse documento, nos itens 8,9,10,11 e 12 que tratam, respectivamente, sobre: "a).Possibilidade de ampliação da autonomia gerencial, orçamentária e financeira das universidades federais, mediante a celebração de contrato de desenvolvimento institucional. Opção da

universidade federal b) Os requisitos legais inerentes ao contrato; c)Elementos de contrato. Afinidade com outros textos legais em vigor; d) Vantagens gerenciais, orçamentárias e financeiras decorrentes da celebração do contrato; e) Disposições finais. Regra de transição sobre pessoal e competência do Ministro de Estado e Educação para editar a regulamentação operacional" (MEC, 1999:8-11).

Após análise atenta desse documento, somos levada a indagar: o que fazer para que a universidade pública, atualmente, não acabe se tornando mera prestadora de serviços, relegando a segundo plano seu papel de instituição social que deveria aspirar à universalidade do conhecimento, à reflexão e à crítica?

Concluindo, cabe indagar: o que fazer?

Se a autonomia é entendida não como um fim em si mesma, mas como condição necessária para garantir as razões de ser da universidade, não se pode perder de vista, que ela não é uma dádiva e sim resultado de exaustiva conquista. Lembramos, também, que a universidade não é um ente abstrato, separado da sociedade que a mantém e do Estado que lhe dá existência jurídica. E, se por um lado nunca houve autonomia universitária em sentido pleno no Brasil, apesar de proclamada na última Constituição e em documentos oficiais, por outro, observa-se que se trava uma luta para a efetiva construção desse princípio. Tal luta, no entanto, não poderá excluir avaliação e controle social da produção universitária, a partir do conhecimento e acompanhamento de suas práticas.

Não se pode esquecer que atravessamos um momento difícil no País, em especial, em termos de universidade pública. Vivemos um período marcado pelo "sucesso" do modelo neoliberal, ainda que seus desacertos sociais e culturais já se façam sentir em outros países da América Latina. Neste sentido, o texto publicado pelo Banco Mundial--*La Enseñanza Superior. Las lecciones derivadas de la experiencia*--é bastante elucidativo. Sua leitura permite ver como as propostas apresentadas pelo Ministério da Educação, no Brasil vão ao encontro das recomendações propostas no documento. Neste, a crítica às instituições universitárias públicas surge, não como mera acusação abstrata, mas relacionada às condições materiais da sociedade, pela adoção por parte do governo da ideologia neoliberal, na qual se defende "a transformação do espaço de discussão política em estratégia de convencimento publicitário; a celebração da suposta eficiência e produtividade da iniciativa privada em oposição à ineficiência e ao desperdício dos serviços públicos; a redefinição da cidadania pela qual o agente político se transforma em agente econômico e o cidadão em consumidor, são todos elementos centrais importantes do projeto liberal global. É nesse projeto global que se insere a redefinição da educação em termos de mercado" (Banco Mundial, 1995: 15). Nessa ótica, aqueles que criticam a universidade pública propõem como saída a "universidade de resultados", a "universidade de serviços", cujo modelo padrão é dado pelas empresas. Para aumentar a eficiência e a qualidade, no que tange ao ensino superior, o Banco Mundial propõe, entre outros, os seguintes pontos chave: "a) fomentar maior diferenciação das instituições, incluindo o

estabelecimento de instituições privadas; b) proporcionar incentivos para que as instituições públicas diversifiquem as fontes de financiamento, entre elas, a participação dos estudantes nos gastos e a vinculação entre o financiamento fiscal e os resultados e c) redefinir a função do governo em relação ao ensino superior e adotar políticas que estejam destinadas, concretamente, a priorizar os objetivos de qualidade e equidade" (Ibid.: 29).

No que tange à autonomia, propõe-se que "uma maior autonomia institucional é a chave do êxito da reforma do ensino público de nível superior, a fim de utilizar os recursos de forma mais eficiente. E que a experiência recente tem indicado que as instituições autônomas respondem melhor aos incentivos para melhorar a qualidade e aumentar a eficiência" (Ibid.: 69-70). O alcance dessa proposta fica mais claro quando se lê o que é pensado a respeito, por exemplo, da organização de um sistema nacional de pesquisa" (Ibid.: 80-1) ou "sobre as estratégias que os governos devem utilizar para a implantação das reformas (Ibid.: 29 e 95). Em nome de uma instituição eficiente e modernizada, o que se quer fazer é privatizar as instituições públicas, inibindo o trabalho ou a autonomia criadora, fazendo-a funcionar à semelhança de uma empresa, na qual o "espaço público de discussão e exercício da democracia ficarão cada vez mais distantes" (Silva, 1994, p. 26).

Quanto aos que têm compromisso com a universidade pública, é extremamente importante que se construa um projeto alternativo para essa universidade em sintonia com as demandas mais amplas da sociedade, não se limitando apenas a discutir o conteúdo das propostas neoliberais e conservadoras. Não basta, portanto, discutir a crise a partir de nós mesmos e das questões mais imediatas. Urge construir uma compreensão histórica de universidade, enquanto instituição que transcende pessoas e gerações, tendo-se presente que esta instituição aponta para o futuro e ultrapassa governos (Vieira, 1991, p. 16), pois sua missão é promover o avanço do saber, da descoberta e ser espaço de socialização do saber.

Assim sendo, será preciso não apenas reagir às críticas às universidades públicas, muitas delas provenientes daqueles que defendem um modelo neoliberal para o País, mas apresentar propostas para o cumprimento efetivo das funções básicas da universidade na sociedade, da qual ela é parte, em contraposição ao que tem sido proposto por alguns autores ou artífices de medidas legais: "uma universidade de serviços". Em suma, é imprescindível recuperar na universidade pública, mais do que nunca, a autoridade resultante do conhecimento. Tal empenho cabe sobretudo a nós, que integramos e produzimos a universidade e não ao governo e a outros setores ligados ao poder instituído ou ao mundo empresarial. Enfim, urge reconstruir, com seriedade e competência o trabalho universitário.

Finalizando, cabe recordar: como lugar de pesquisa, de produção de conhecimento, a universidade é ao mesmo tempo, espaço de socialização do saber, na medida em que divulga e socializa o saber nela e por ela produzido. Vista sob essa ótica, a autonomia universitária não é um fim em si mesmo, mas condição necessária para a concretização dos fins da universidade. É uma exigência que se apóia

no próprio ser dessa instituição, não uma dádiva, mas uma utopia a ser conquistada.

Notas

1. A respeito ver, também, da ANDES-SN. A Diretoria discute com a sociedade brasileira questões relacionadas à autonomia e novas propostas de financiamento ao ensino superior, 1999.

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The Quality of Researchers' Searches of the ERIC Database

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Abstract
During the last ten years, end-users of electronic databases have become progressively less dependent on librarians and other intermediaries. This is certainly the case with the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Database, a resource once accessed by passing a paper query form to a librarian and now increasingly searched directly by end-users. This article empirically examines the search strategies currently being used by researchers and other groups. College professors and educational researchers appear to be doing a better job searching the database than other ERIC patrons. However, the study suggests that most end-users should be using much better search strategies.

A critical component of conducting almost any kind of research is to examine the literature for both related content and previously employed research methods. By reviewing the related literature, researchers are better able to formulate their research questions, build on past research, and design more effective studies. In the field of education, a usual first step in identifying related literature is to search the over 950,000 citations included in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database.

With its availability on the Internet and on CD-ROM, the ERIC database is now accessed by a wide and diverse audience and less specialized audience. In May 1999, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation alone had over 3,500 users searching the ERIC database daily. This is quite a change from 10 years ago when access to the ERIC database was typically restricted to trained reference librarians who had accounts with commercial information service organizations such as Dialog.

The question studied in this paper is the quality of the search strategies of today's end-users. We present effective strategies for searching the ERIC database, a brief summary of the literature on end-user searching, and empirical information on the quality of end-users searches of the ERIC database installed at the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation web site.

Effective Strategies for Searching the ERIC Database

The Educational Resources Information Center is the largest source of educational information in the world. The most well-known and frequently used body of information produced by the ERIC system is the ERIC Database which contains close to one million citations and abstracts reflecting both published and "gray literature" (conference papers, contractor reports, etc.) gathered by the 16 ERIC subject area clearinghouses. For over thirty years, the database has been a widely-used and well-known research tool.

The ERIC database can be accessed through various media. Researchers may search the database via Dialog, the Internet or CD-ROMs produced by several vendors. Although, the database is still searchable by way of paper indexes, electronic formats are the concern here because they are largely responsible for the surge in end-user searching.

There are some good search practices that are applicable to all electronic versions of the database. One of the most important tactics is the use of Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to refine queries. One-word and one-phrase searches are rarely sufficient. When using Boolean operators, avoid the common mistake of confusing the function of "AND" and "OR". The query *Portfolios AND Nongraded Evaluation* retrieves only documents containing both descriptors, while a search for *Portfolios OR Nongraded Evaluation* retrieves a set of documents that have either or both of the descriptors.

Another fundamental rule for successful searching is to use all relevant descriptors (ERIC indexing terms). Find all related and narrower terms that apply and link them into the search with the Boolean operator "OR". Using all relevant descriptors increases recall (i.e. comprehensiveness of retrieval) and often reveals useful citations not found when searching using only one or two descriptors. The ERIC database is a very well indexed database, but has not been constructed with perfect consistency over the past 30 years. Further, the terms preferred by any individual end-user may not be the same as the terms preferred by the ERIC indexers. For example, ERIC uses *Test Wiseness*, *Student Evaluation* and *Disadvantaged Youth*. The terms *Test Preparation, Student Assessment* and *Disadvantaged Students* are not ERIC descriptors. Failing to use the controlled vocabulary terms will result in a search that misses highly relevant documents.

Because of these gaps between the database's controlled vocabulary and natural language, use of *The Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors* (Houston, 1995) is essential to successful searching. The thesaurus, which has been published in paper since the creation of the database, is now available on many CD-ROM versions of the database and uniquely at the website of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation (ERIC/AE).

The thesaurus is incorporated in the Search ERIC Wizard, one of the user interfaces for the ERIC/AE's Internet version of the database (http://ericae.net/scripts/ewiz/amain2.asp). The ERIC Wizard interacts with users to indicate whether a search term is an actual ERIC descriptor. If a term entered by a user is not a descriptor, the Wizard suggests alternatives. When the correct descriptor is located, the

Wizard displays an array of related and narrower terms. The user may then choose from the first term or the related terms to construct a search of the database.

Hints for Effective Searching

- Use Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to craft good queries.
- Expand the query by ORing appropriate narrower and related terms
- Use the print of an electronic ERIC thesaurus to find useful descriptors.
- Use the Building Block or Pearl Building methods.
- Conduct multiple searches.

An added feature of the search engine installed on the ERIC/AE website is a Find Similar link. The Find Similar feature performs a popular search strategy known as *Pearl Building*. *Pearl Building* involves the constructing of new searches around descriptors found in the good results of preliminary searches. The Find Similar link for a particular citation will produce a new set of documents that are based on the first document's descriptors. This function often retrieves useful documents not found in the first search. You can choose the best documents from the second set of citations and continue to re-circulate the search until you no longer find any new, relevant hits. You may also edit the descriptors of a selected document to search only for the descriptors judged relevant to your needs.

Another good technique for organizing a complex search, applicable to all search situations, is the *Building Blocks* method. On a piece of paper, write out the two or three most essential components of a given question. These are the building blocks of the search. Construct a search by linking the building blocks with what you believe are the correct Boolean operators. If the resultant search is not very successful, expand it by attaching related descriptors to one or more of the building blocks. Continue to add to the building blocks and, if necessary, rearranging the Boolean operators, until you achieve satisfactory results. Inherent in this method is the necessity of conducting multiple queries for a given search.

Literature Review

This section summarizes some of the literature with regard to end- user searching with particular attention to the quality of end-user results, quality of search strategies, time spent on a search, use of thesauri, the frequency of multiple searches, and experience. Since this study is concerned with end-user searching of an electronic database through an Internet interface, both studies of users of on-line databases and studies of users of Internet search engines are relevant. Studies of the first type of users are quite numerous, as on-line databases have been widely used for over 20 years. Relevant literature on the search behavior of Internet users, on the other hand, is still rather scarce.

Quality of end-user results

There is a large body of literature claiming that most end-users obtain poor results when searching for themselves (Lancaster, Elzy, Zeter, Metzler and Yuen, 1994; Bates and Siegfried, 1993; Tolle and Sehchang, 1985; Teitelbaum and Sewell, 1986). Lancaster, Elzy, Zeter, Metzler and Yuen, for example, compared faculty and student searches of ERIC on CD-ROM to searches conducted by librarians. They noted that most of the end-users found only a third of the relevant articles found by the librarians.

There are several studies, however, where end-users are able to search on- line databases with good results. Sullivan, Borgman and Wippern (1990) compared the searching of 40 doctoral students given minimal training with searches done by 20 librarians. The 40 students were no less satisfied with their searches of ERIC and Inspec than with the results retrieved by the librarians, and, in fact, found their searches to be more precise. Similarly, the patent attorneys in Vollaro and Hawkin (1986) felt that intermediaries could have done a better job, but were largely satisfied with their own searches. Both studies observed that the end-users still had trouble searching databases. Sullivan, Borgman and Wippern noted that the end-users " made more errors, prepared less well than intermediaries and had less complete results."

There are a few explanations for why some end-users may search more successfully than others. Yang (1997) observed that certain concepts and metaphors used by novice users to construct searches were beneficial to searching. Marchionini, Dwiggins and Katz (1993) suggested that subject expertise helps end-users search more effectively.

Strategies

Several studies have concluded that end-users use poor searching techniques, marked by overly simple statements and limited use of Boolean operators or other commands (Bates and Siegfried, 1993; Tolle and Hah, 1985; Teitelbaum and Sewell, 1986). In their study of 27 humanities scholars, Bates and Siegfried (1993) observed that 63% of the searches contained only one or two terms and 25% included no Boolean operators at all.

Nims and Rich (1998) studied over 1,000 searches conducted on the Search Voyeur webpage hosted by Magellan. The Search Voyeur site allows users to spy on the searches of other users. The researchers found a profusion of poorly constructed searches. Searchers performed one-word searches when more complex queries linked with Boolean operators were necessary. Overall, a mere 13% of the searchers used Boolean operators. The study, which observed how the general public searches the entire World Wide Web, suggests that end-users may have more trouble searching Internet databases than older online databases. End-users of Internet databases may be less familiar with the search protocols and may have higher expectations of the technology's ability to make up for their poor searching techniques.

Time Spent Searching

Looking at the transaction logs of 11,067 search sessions on computers linked to Medline at the National Library of Medicine, Tolle and Hah (1985) found that end-users averaged significantly less time searching than librarians. Patrons in the study averaged 15 minutes of searching per session, while librarians in the control group averaged 20 to 25 minutes.

Use of a Thesaurus

In their study of 41 patent attorneys searching Inspec, Valloro and Hawkins (1986) observed that the majority of the end-users did not utilize the database's thesaurus. Interviews revealed that most of the subjects did not feel familiar enough with the main functions of the database to effectively use the thesaurus (which they considered an advanced feature). The study suggests that end-users may be under-utilizing online thesauri, but the subject remains largely unexamined.

Number of Queries

Conducting multiple searches is often essential to successful searching. Yet studies suggest that only around half of all end-users perform more than one search per session. (Spink 1996; Huang 1992). Spink conducted 100 interviews with academic end-users at Rutgers University and found that only 44% conducted multiple searches per session.

Experience

The most significant factor determining searching success appears to be experience using a database. In a recent study of law school students searching Quicklaw, Yuan (1997) showed that the search repertoires of students became more complex and effective over time. Tolle and Hah (1986) found a correlation between experience and the frequency of multiple searches. Only 8% of the experienced users in the study stopped searching after a failed search, while the rate of stopping was 11% for moderately experienced users and 20% for inexperienced users.

Summary

The quality of end-user searching appears to vary depending on the individual end-user. Some searchers are stronger than others because of skills they bring to searching or gain from using an online database over time. However, the literature suggests that most end-users could be doing better. Even the studies that recorded a high level of end-user satisfaction, observed that end-users rely on overly simple searches, make frequent errors, and fail to attain comprehensive results.

Method

For two days in early November 1998, all patrons wanting to search the ERIC database installed at the ERIC/AE website were required to complete a 10-item background questionnaire. For each

patron, we then tracked a) the maximum number of OR's in their searches as a measure of search quality, b) the number of queries per session, c) whether they used the thesaurus or free-text search engine, d) number of hits examined, and e) the amount of time devoted to searching the ERIC database per session.

Data were collected on 4,086 user sessions. Because some browsers were not set to accept identifiers, we were not always able to relate background data to session information. Accordingly, our analysis is based on the 3,420 users with background and corresponding session information.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary; patrons could go elsewhere to search the ERIC database. However, our questionnaire was short and our data collection was unobtrusive. Based on the prior week's log, we estimate our retention rate was over 90%.

Results

We asked our end-users "what is the primary purpose of your search today?". As shown in Table 1, most patrons were searching in connection with preparing a research report.

Table 1
Purpose of searching the ERIC database

Purpose	N	Percent
Research report preparation	1825	53.4%
Class assignment	601	17.6
Professional interest	554	16.2
Lesson planning	177	5.2
Background for policy making	175	5.1
Classroom management	88	2.6
TOTAL	**3240**	100.0%

Some searching characteristics of the entire sample and of groups of individuals who identified themselves as college librarians, college professors, and researchers are presented in Table 2. College librarians are presumably the most trained and most experienced user group, while college professors and researchers are presumably the most diligent user group.

Most variables were fairly normally distributed. Accordingly, means and standard deviations (std dev) are presented in the table. The amount of time spent searching, however, was quite skewed. Central tendency and variability for time are represented by medians and

semi-interquartile ranges (sir).

Table 2
Searching Characteristics for Select User Groups

		Quality		N queries		Thesaurus Use	Hits Examined		Time (in seconds)	
	n	Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev	%	Mean	Std dev	Median	sir
College Librarian	96	.91	3.89	2.66	3.26	46.8	3.11	5.41	207	240
Researcher	445	.42	1.26	3.04	3.69	37.6	4.85	10.23	376	408
College Professor	209	.37	1.10	2.49	2.46	44.6	5.58	15.09	361	345
All users	3420	.44	1.77	2.75	2.95	38.7	3.65	8.65	352	351

A good search incorporates Boolean operators to capture appropriate terms. As a measure of search quality, we noted the maximum number of OR's used in any query during a patron's session. The data indicate that there is about one OR in every two search sessions. College librarians tend to conduct the most complicated searches and college professors conducted the simplest searches. To provide an additional perspective on these numbers, we computed the number of OR's used in the 84 pre-packaged search strategies at http://ericae.net/scripts/ewiz/expert.htm. These search strategies were developed by the top reference librarians across the entire ERIC system. The mean number of OR's used in these high quality, general purpose searches was 2.9 with a standard deviation of 2.8. Thus, the data show that on- line users tend to be conducting very simple searches that do not take account of subject matter nuances.

The typical user performs 2 to 3 queries per search session and there is little variability across groups. In contrast, the reference staff at the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation typically conduct 3 to 6 searches when responding to patron inquiries.

Not using the ERIC thesaurus to guide a search is equivalent to guessing which terms are used by the ERIC indexers. Using the thesaurus, one can employ the proper terms in a search. College librarians and college professors use the thesaurus much more often than most users. Yet, less than half of the searches at the ERIC/AE site take advantage of this unique, special feature.

For any given topic in education, there is typically a large number of related papers and resources. To find all the resources which meet their specific purposes, users need to examine a large number of citations. College professors and researchers are much more diligent than other users in examining citations. Further, as noted by the variance, some professors and researchers are looking at a very large number of citations. Still, the average number of citations examined is quite small, typically about 5 or 6 hits for the most diligent groups. It appears that most patrons, especially those that are not trained researchers, are not looking beyond the first page of hits.

The study showed that the median amount of time spent searching the ERIC/AE site is about 6 minutes. College professors and researchers spend slightly more time than the typical user searching for information. College librarians spend considerably less time searching.

At a minimum, we would like to see at least one OR in the query, more than one query, and at least four hits examined. Only 153 (4.5%) of our examined 3420 users met these criteria.

Discussion

Our findings with regard to Internet searching of the ERIC database are consistent with the broader literature on end-user database searching. Some researchers may be doing a better job than most patrons. Nevertheless, most end-users are conducting few searches, crafting poor searches, not using the thesaurus, and are examining only a few potential hits. While there are times an end-user may want to quickly look up something, such as finding a reference, research report preparation usually involves finding a collection of several relevant, high quality studies. This work cannot be done quickly. Ninety-five percent of the searches we examined do not meet our minimal criteria. From our point of view, these results are very disappointing. Patrons are not using effective search strategies and cannot possibly find the best and most relevant articles in the database being searched.

We have reason to believe that most end-users are satisfied with *any* somewhat-relevant hit and are not looking for the best citations. After we added the Find Similar option to our search engine, we noted that few end-users were taking advantage of the feature. We posted a short survey for a few hours asking why. The vast majority of users (80%) told us they were able to find what they wanted on the first page of hits. The reality is that with the default search options, hits are presented in what is basically chronological order. The ranked relevance option does not necessarily present the best quality documents first. Users may be satisfied, but they are not finding the best.

We cannot place enough emphasis on the need to use the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors* when constructing a search strategy. In addition to the need to include related and narrower terms, the philosophy behind the *ERIC Thesaurus* and its structure necessitate added diligence on the part of the searcher. The *ERIC Thesaurus* is designed to reflect the terms used in the professional and scholarly education literature. It is not a strictly hierarchical thesaurus with a rigid set of mutually-exclusive term arrays. Thus, the *ERIC Thesaurus* is populated with terms that partially overlap and its structure sometimes necessitates variable search strategy design. For example, to find the documents that address the evaluation of instructional methods or activities one should search *"Course Evaluation" OR "Curriculum Evaluation"*. This is a problem with the social sciences in general as terms are less well defined, more fluid and less strictly hierarchical than in the physical sciences.

We occasionally hear frustration from the research community with regard to the ERIC database. The data imply that much of the

end-user frustration is due to poor end-user searches. This is not to say the ERIC database is not without its faults. The ERIC system has basically been level-funded for the past 20 years and there has been no system-wide examination of ERIC's acquisition and processing efforts in 20 years. As a result, there are gaps in ERIC coverage. At our own clearinghouse, we have noted that the 39 journals that we process for inclusion in the ERIC database produce 1,100 articles. Yet, due to our budget, we have usually been limited to entering 700 articles per year. We process few international journals and are slow to add new journals, regardless of their quality or prominence.

We believe there has also been a steady decline in the "gray" literature portion of the ERIC database. Of the approximately 5,500 papers presented at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association, for example, only about 1,200 are entered into the ERIC database. Many authors do not have prepared papers and many that have papers do not respond to solicitation requests. Authors should view ERIC as a reproduction service. We make copies of papers available to others. Inclusion in the ERIC database only means that a paper has met some minimal acceptability criteria; it is not equivalent to peer-reviewed publishing and it should not preclude an author from submitting their paper to a refereed journal. Accordingly, we do not see any reason an author should not submit their paper to ERIC. In fact, submitting high quality papers can result in more people seeing the research and more people submitting their papers. Thus, we believe many authors are not assuming their share of the responsibility in building the ERIC resource.

While ERIC database content has its limitations, we believe the lack of end-user search skills is the major impediment to locating the best and most relevant resources. Poorly formed searches and poor search strategies cannot possibly find the best citations. We are encouraged by the conclusions of Sullivan, Borgman and Wippern (1990). With minimal training and a bit of diligence, end-users *can* attain satisfactory results. It is our hope that readers of this article will follow the suggestions outlined at the beginning of this paper and, concomitantly, increase their chances of finding the best and most relevant documents in the ERIC database.

Note

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Solving the Policy Implementation Problem: The Case of Arizona Charter Schools

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Abstract
When Republican legislators in Arizona failed to approve educational vouchers in four consecutive legislative sessions, a charter school program was approved as a compromise. The charter school policy was written during a special summer session and within three years, over 30,000 students were enrolled in 260 charter schools across the state. Republican policy makers, who failed to enact voucher legislation, proclaimed the charter school program to be an overwhelming success and protected it from amendments by Democrats and potential actions of bureaucrats that could have altered the policy intent. Research on the implementation of policy indicates that state and local implementors frequently undermine or alter legislative intentions. However, when Arizona policy makers approved the charter school policy, they overcame this persistent implementation phenomenon and, in fact, succeeded in preserving the legislative intentions in the working program. This policy study analyzes how they were able to achieve this elusive result. Key policy makers attended to four significant features of policy implementation in creating the charter school policy: communication, financial resources, implementor attitudes, and bureaucratic structure. Manipulating these key variables allowed policy makers to reduce implementation slippage.

The Implementation Problem

Contrary to the desires of federal, state, and local policy makers, policies are not self-executing. After policy enactors develop legislation, various stages precede a working program. Simply because legislators express explicit intentions in policy does not guarantee those aims will be preserved through the implementation process. Frequently, implementors misconstrue or disagree with the conceived purpose and undermine legislative intent.

Beginning in the 1970s with the work of Pressman and Wildavski (1973), studies on the implementation of government policy over the following 16 years illustrated the problem of convincing local implementors to adhere to the spirit of government mandates. This implementation problem has been repeatedly identified in studies of agricultural, economic, energy, environmental, labor, penal, public health, urban planning, technology, and welfare policies at the state and federal levels. Bäum (1981; 1984) and Clune (1984) identified

similar frustrations in the implementation of judicial policy.

In the late 1970s, research on federal and state educational policy also identified the implementation problem (Barro, 1978; Berman & Mclaughlin, 1978; Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977). Over the following two decades, educational researchers have continued to highlight the implementation problem in their work (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1981; Hall, 1995; Hall & McGinty, 1997). In a comprehensive review of the literature Odden (1991) concluded:

> In short, early implementation research findings coupled with somewhat later findings on the local educational change process concluded that local response was inherently at odds with state (or federal) program initiative. If higher levels of governments took policy initiatives, it was unlikely local educators would implement those policies in compliance with either the spirit, expectations, rules, regulations or program components . (p. 2) (Note 1)

> Social scientists from various disciplines studying an array of social programs acknowledge that policies emanating from higher levels of government are inherently problematic. McLaughlin (1998) identified local capacity and will as two paramount variables that affect the outcomes of the implementation process.

> The local expertise, organizational routines, and resources available to support planned change efforts generate fundamental differences in the ability of practitioners to plan, execute, or sustain an innovative effort. The presence of will or motivation to embrace policy objectives or strategies is essential to generate the effort and energy necessary to a successful project . (p.72) (Note 2)

Despite the preponderance of research indicating slippage during the implementation of social policy, legislators are not completely impotent after enacting legislation. McDonnell and Elmore (1987) identified four discrete methods policy makers can use to increase the likelihood that policy intentions are preserved in working programs. "They can set rules, they can conditionally transfer money, they can invest in future capacity, and they can grant or withdraw authority to individuals and agencies" (p.140). Baum (1984) described two additional sources of power policy enactors hold over policy implementors- they can investigate and publicize. "These powers allow legislators to embarrass an agency and its officials." (p.41). What is consistent over three decades of research in the policy implementation literature of social policy is that armed with these "policy instruments," more often than not, policy enactors fail to manipulate the actions of policy implementors. Current research on the implementation of education policy is sparse and further exploration of this area is necessary. Accordingly, this study sought to clarify the nexus between policy development and program enactment by

focusing on the implementation process. The actions of policy makers and the contextual environment surrounding the implementation of the Arizona Charter School policy were analyzed using a case study methodology. The purpose of this research was to investigate three interrelated research questions concerning the design and implementation of Arizona's charter school legislation.

1. How did policy makers articulate the intent of the charter school policy?
2. After three years of a working charter school program, were they satisfied with the results?
3. How were state policy makers able to preserve their original intentions through the implementation process?

Methodology

A descriptive and exploratory case study approach was utilized for this policy study because how or why questions were posed, I had little control over the events, and the focus was on contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 1994, p.1). The study was completed using data from the analysis of documents, observations of key actors, and focused interviews with policy makers and policy implementors.

Relevant documentary information from a variety of sources, including articles from Arizona newspapers, minutes from the Committee on Education meetings of the state legislature, and relevant charter school statutes were analyzed. Data from documents were used to verify and strengthen data from other sources (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Key actors were observed in various contexts, including Committee on Education meetings in the Arizona State Senate and the Arizona House of Representatives during the 1998 legislative session. Also, observations of the meetings of the State Board of Education and the State Board for Charter schools were completed from 1995-1998 . (Note 3) My role in the field was toward the observer side of the participant observer continuum (Gold, 1969).

The third significant source of data came from focused interviews. A semi-structured interview protocol was employed with 24 key actors from the following four groups:

1. Legislative insiders
2. Administrative staff and board members from the two state level charter school sponsoring agencies (the State Board of Education and the State Board for Charter Schools)
3. Administrative staff members from the Arizona Department of Education, including the Superintendent of Public Instruction
4. Administrative staff members from the Office of the Auditor General

Interviews were taped and transcribed. All participants were given a chance to comment on the content of the interview transcripts and all 24 granted permission for the quotations used in this study. In

some cases participants insisted on receiving credit for their comments, while others preferred to remain anonymous.

Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously through a process of reduction, display, and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). When data from one source was collected it was coded and compared with data collected from the same source at another time, as well as data collected from alternative sources. As this process continued, patterns emerged. These patterns often became themes that were refined and challenged against data from competing sources. Eventually distinct categories developed, and conclusions emerged.

This qualitative case study provides a rich account of the Arizona policy making context, however, generalization is limited, and this single case provides us with little insight into national trends. A multi-state comparison would be useful in such a pursuit. Moreover, most of the data collected was based entirely on the perceptions of policy makers and implementors. The recent nature of the reform, combined with the minimal reporting requirements for charter schools resulted in a meager amount of quantitative data.

Although this research is focused on the ways that Arizona legislators attempted to insure their intent was carried out, the author takes no position on the question whether this goal and these objectives are desirable in themselves. Others have pointed out the value of "loose coupling," (Weick, 1982) "street-level bureaucracy," (Lipsky, 1980) and other ways in which legislative or regulatory intent are modified or, in extreme situations, even subverted, for the good of all. Finally, this study does not address whether or not this particular reform, charter schools, produces meaningful changes in classroom practice (see Bomotti, Ginsberg & Cobb, 1999 and Knapp, 1997 for further discussion of this type of research). Unarguably an important question, it was beyond the scope of this research.

Legislative Intent

Across the United States many organizations, including Republicans, Democrats, teachers unions, business organizations, and parent groups have climbed on the charter school bandwagon. Many of the groups promote disparate ideologies, but every organization has specific motivations for its support . (Note 4)

In the US, the charter school concept has been driven by three distinct ideologies. Consequently, policy makers define the problem to be solved by charter schools differently in various states. Some state legislators argue that the current bureaucratic system of public education has stifled educational improvement and innovation in the United States. Charter schools in these states typically are granted a blanket waiver from most rules and regulations. Other state policy makers believe that market mechanisms will improve the public school system. In these states charter schools must compete for and maintain their student population. Finally, a few state legislators maintain that teacher professionalism must be increased before any real improvements in public education will occur. In these states teachers

have the power to make and implement decisions that affect learning in the classroom (Garn, 1998, p. 50).

This research first examined how key legislative insiders in Arizona defined the problem and articulated the intent of their charter school policy. Determining intent does not easily lend itself to precise measurement. However, the triangulation of various data sources confirmed the purpose of the policy.

The former Chair of the House Education Committee, Lisa Graham-Keegan, defined the "problem" that the charter school policy was intended to solve in a 1994 article that appeared in the Arizona Republic. "I hope this reform will begin to demonstrate that you don't need all of the bureaucratic overlay we now have in public schools." What they [charter schools] are getting is freedom from regulations in return for greater [market] accountability" (Mattern, 1994, p. A1). This was corroborated in the interview data. A leading legislator in the Arizona Senate reflected on the original intentions.

> The bureaucratic administration and the monopoly that public schools used to have are now being eroded by charter schools." Charter schools have to compete in a market for students. So, if they for whatever reason can't attract children to go to that school, they are not going to have a school. And that's the whole key to charter schools; that's what disciplines them and that is their accountability mechanism. (Senate Education Committee Member Tom Patterson, March 16, 1998)

Furthermore, even legislators from the minority party, who were ideologically opposed to market accountability, recognized the aims of the charter school reform.

> Well, for the rest of the world, the non-charter public schools, there is this perception, and also laws, which say, 'If I am going to give you the money out of the purse, then you have to give me accountability back.' So, what happened with these [charter schools] was that by using the definition of the 'innovativeness' of charter schools, we can just give them the money and part of the 'innovativeness' is not bothering them about the details of how the money is being spent." So, I guess, I mean, to me there is no [bureaucratic] accountability. (House Education Committee Member Kathy Foster, March 24, 1998)

> Well, right now, currently, there's an atmosphere in the state that the 'buyer beware,' 'let the market forces drive them,' 'people are voting with their feet,' any number of clichés. As far as voting with their feet or the rhetoric you hear that charter schools are more accountable because there is an actual contract they have to adhere to. Well, the oversight of this contract is lame at best. The Department of Ed[ucation] and even the charter school boards themselves, and local

> districts that have all chartered, there has been very little monitoring of activities and adhering to their charter. (Senate Education Committee member Mary Hartley, March 23, 1998)

Arizona legislators created a charter school policy that was intended to address two intertwined problems. First, they wanted to reduce the bureaucracy with which public schools must contend. Second, they wanted to inject market mechanisms into the public school system. Satisfaction with the Results Building on the first research question, the second goal of the study was to determine if Arizona's policy makers were satisfied with the results of the working charter school program. Data from interviews with key actors indicated that they were pleased with the effect of the legislation.

> Well, we hoped that it [charter school policy] would have a large impact and I think it is more successful than we anticipated it would be in the time span. Arizona is probably one of the leading states in the number of charters that have been granted and we have a few failures, but we expected that. (Chair of the House Education Committee, Dan Schottle, March 25, 1998)

> It's [the charter reform] been one of those things that I think we had a pretty clear idea of what kind of principles we wanted it based on, and particularly what kind of accountability we wanted for charter schools.... And we were astonishingly successful, but I don't think we realized, or I certainly did not realize all the implications of that at the time and what a large and profound public policy movement this would be. (Senate Education Committee Member Tom Patterson, March 16, 1998)

> I am not a plan-ahead person, and I don't know what will happen in the future, and I certainly did not know with the charter school legislation when I was working on it. That is just not the way I work. However, I did know there were some good principles in that legislation and then it took off.... Charter schools have just opened up one more venue for school choice. They vastly surpassed the number of schools that I or anyone else anticipated.... Yes, I am happy with the program, and, yes I think it is working like I wanted it to. (Personal communication, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Lisa Graham-Keegan, April 21, 1998)

The interview data were confirmed by data from documentary sources. All proposed charter school legislation from 1995-1998 was coded into three categories: bills that reinforced the intent, measures that subverted the intent, and acts not related to the intent . (Note 5) Moreover, the proposals were grouped by party preference. Assuming that proponents would protect the program from bills that would alter

the policy intent, the documentary record was clear. Although many amendments (proposed by Democrats) would have subverted the legislative intent, very few of those made it out of the House or Senate Education Committees, and even fewer were written into law. And those proposed by Republicans reinforced the intent and were more likely to be written into law.

Legislators involved in passing the charter law in 1994, who remained in office through 1998, explicitly understood their role in protecting the principles expressed in the statute. Senator John Huppenthal, Chair of the Senate Education Committee stated that "They [charter schools] are still getting sucked back into the bureaucracy." I've been able to defeat any legislation that would harm the charter schools" (March 23, 1998). The stability of the political support structure from 1994 to 1998 contributed to the preservation of intentions. Champions of the charter school policy remained in powerful positions and were able to protect the program from amendments that could potentially subvert the aims of the policy. Senator John Huppenthal served on the Education Committee from 1993 through 1998 and chaired the committee from 1995 through 1998. The Chair of the House Education Committee, Lisa Graham-Keegan, resigned from the House of Representatives and soon after was elected Superintendent of Public Instruction. Representative Dan Schottle assumed leadership of the House Education Committee in 1995 and maintained a strong defense of charter schools. Senator Tom Patterson was the first to introduce the idea of charter school reform to the Arizona Legislature. Formerly the Majority Leader, his support and defense of the charter policy was invaluable to the preservation of intentions.

In sum, policy enactors who enacted the statute remained in powerful positions. These champions were pleased with the working program and worked diligently to protect it. With regard to the first two research questions, the data were clear. Policy makers wanted to limit the bureaucratic requirements for charter schools and replace them with market accountability mechanisms. Moreover, after four years of charter school operation in the state, they were satisfied that the policy had achieved those objectives. The final step in this policy study was to address the third and larger research question: How were Arizona policy makers able to preserve the original legislative intent through the implementation phase when so many mandates are subverted?

Avoiding Implementation Slippage

To address the final research question required a framework that could isolate the linkages between the national and state political levels, state political and state bureaucratic levels, and state bureaucratic and charter school levels. Hall and McGinty's (1997) mesodomain framework was useful in clarifying how "the realization of intentions is shown as both constrained and enabled by (1) organizational context and conventions, (2) linkages between multiple sites and phases of the policy process, (3) the mobilization of

resources, and (4) a dynamic and multifaceted conceptualization of power" (p. 439).

The National Level

At the national level, George W. Bush pushed hard for systemic reform of the district public school system and was the first American president to endorse charter schools. Charter school legislation was first approved in Minnesota during the 1991 legislative session. Since that time, the charter school reform has evolved into a national movement as 34 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have approved this policy. Bush's successor, William J. Clinton, recognized this national education reform trend and called for the development of 3,000 charter schools by 2001 (Clinton, 1997). Accordingly, federal funds for charter school research were first approved in 1994 through amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Federal stimulus funds to charter school operators (to defray start up costs) increased from $6 million in 1995 to $100 Million in 1998 (Wohlstetter & Griffin, 1997).

Information about charter schools spread nationally through various channels, but two organizations took the lead. The first issue network was the Center for School Change at the Hubert H. Humphry Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota (Nathan, 1996). The Pioneer Institute, a conservative think tank located in Massachusetts, was the second organization to take an early lead in publicizing this reform (Wohlstetter, Wenning, & Briggs, 1995).

National to State Political Linkage

Ted Kolderie, a Senior Policy Analyst at the University of Minnesota's Hubert Humphry Institute, visited Arizona in 1993 to explain the charter school concept. Kolderie, who was influential in lobbying the Minnesota Legislature on the merits of charter schools, emphasized the professionalism for teachers embodied in the reform. In Arizona, his vision of charter schools was rejected. Providing teachers with more autonomy was not a problem that Arizona's leading legislators wanted to fix. In addition to disagreeing with the core ideology (as described by Kolderie), in 1993 notable policy makers in Arizona were pondering more radical educational change--school vouchers. Vouchers for all children were a top education reform priority for influential Republican members of the legislature and Arizona's Republican Governor, Fife Symington. During the 1993 legislative session, Symington stated that he would defeat any education reform that did not contain a voucher program.

Conversely, Arizona Democrats, the minority party, were fundamentally against the concept of a voucher program. They were able to unite and, with a few moderate Republicans, mustered enough support to defeat voucher proposals in the 1991, 1992, and 1993 legislative sessions. By 1994, the calls for educational reform were incessant. The public and the media were increasingly demanding that legislators "do something." As Arizona's 1994 legislative session

ended, again without voucher legislation, the pressure intensified.

In the early 1990s, staff members at the Goldwater Institute, a conservative think tank located in Phoenix, developed several alternative voucher proposals, ranging from limited to full participation. When voucher legislation was defeated in four successive sessions, Goldwater staff members promoted charter schools as a viable policy option. Goldwater officials closely monitored the school choice issue networks and were aware of the Pioneer Institute's work on charter schools. They saw the potential in the concept, but rather than focusing on the teacher autonomy, the Goldwater Institute's proposal emphasized radically decreasing bureaucratic oversight and forcing charter schools to compete for students. Behind closed doors in a Republican caucus, the Goldwater Institute's plan was modified without input from Democratic legislators. Authored by House Education Chair Lisa Graham-Keegan and championed by leading legislators, it quickly passed through the special session and was enacted into law on September 15, 1994.

Contrary to many other states, in Arizona charter school legislation was approved as a compromise in place of vouchers. Although both Democrat and Republican legislators voted for the bill, it is too simplistic to argue that there was bipartisan support. Democrats were against any plan that would divert funding from the district public schools. However, they were worried they would not have the votes to defeat another voucher bill. Conversely, Republicans were displeased they had failed at their original voucher intentions, but were anxious to pass an education reform that increased parental and student choice while decreasing bureaucratic oversight.

State Political to State Bureaucratic Linkage

The state political to state bureaucratic linkage was critical to the preservation of policy makers' intentions. Although policy makers had clearly articulated intentions for the charter school plan, this did not guarantee that state level bureaucrats would promote those interests during implementation. There has been a history of discord between the state Department of Education and state legislators; the latter feeling that bureaucrats too frequently misinterpreted the aims of the policy and the former feeling they were constantly being asked to do too much with too little. Due to the institutional distrust, policy makers took two explicit steps to ensure that state level bureaucrats did not undermine their intentions. First, the legislature minimized the authority of the Department of Education to regulate charter schools. McDonnell and Elmore (1987) stated that "Selecting or creating an implementation agency is often as important a choice for policymakers as transferring money or specifying rules" (p.138). The legislation granted two state sponsoring boards (the State Board of Education and the newly created State Board for Charter Schools) general sponsorship and oversight responsibilities for charter schools. This shifted the authority away from the Arizona Department of Education to regulate public charter schools.

To reinforce this shift in authority, legislators included a statute that provided the governor with the power to appoint members to the

State Board for Charter Schools. Although Governor Symington was originally opposed to charter legislation, it was not because he opposed increasing school choice. Rather he wanted additional choices (including private and religious schools) and supported education vouchers. However, he quickly reversed course and championed the charter school reform when he realized vouchers were not a viable policy option. As a strong proponent of school choice, Symington appointed seven individuals to the State Board for Charter Schools who supported the legislative intent. Board members understood that they first needed to approve as many applications as allowed under the law, and that second, they would play a "hands off" role in oversight (Garn & Stout, in press). The members of the State Board of Education, while supportive, were so to a lesser extent because of a slightly more diverse board makeup . (Note 6)

In addition to transferring much of the authority for charter schools to the State Sponsoring Boards, legislators used a second policy instrument to ensure state bureaucrats would not interfere with the spirit of the legislation. They passed the charter school reform as an unfunded mandate for state level administrative staff. The Arizona Department of Education, the Office of the Auditor General, the State Board of Education and the State Board for Charter Schools received no additional funding for charter school staff. This proved to be an effective policy instrument in limiting the influence of bureaucratic agencies. The Arizona Department of Education [ADE] and the Office of the Auditor General illustrate this point.

The Arizona Department of Education could easily justify an oversight role for charter schools. The legislative statute creating this agency speaks of a responsibility for all public schools. However, without additional funds to hire charter school support staff, ADE's role was effectively limited. Moreover, the charter statute asked little of the Department beyond providing general support to the sponsoring boards on an as-needed basis. Without clearly articulated statutory demands and funding to hire charter school support staff, ADE was overwhelmed by these new responsibilities and unable to institute any meaningful oversight on charter schools.

The Office of the Auditor General faced the same dilemma as ADE: they had statutory responsibilities, but received no additional funding to carry out those duties. The Office of the Auditor General was created to ensure that public entities were using tax-payer dollars appropriately. Arizona Revised Statute §41-1279.03 requires this office: "to be an independent source of impartial information concerning state and local governmental entities and to provide specific recommendations to improve the operations of those entities" (http://www .azleg.state.az.us/ars/41/1279). Accordingly, this agency had responsibilities for conducting and reviewing financial audits of public schools. Because charter schools are publicly funded, they came under the purview of this agency. Similar to the Arizona Department of Education, the Office of the Auditor General Office was not allocated additional funding to meet this charge.

One fundamental objective of the charter reform was to make sure that charter schools were not caught up in the same bureaucratic

rules and regulations as the district public schools. Transferring authority to specially appointed bureaucratic agencies and limiting funds to government agencies for administrative staff effectively achieved that goal.

An equally important contextual factor ensured the original intentions embodied in Arizona's charter school policy were intact during the state political to state bureaucratic linkage. Lisa Graham-Keegan was the author of the charter legislation as Chair of the House Education Committee. The charter school legislation took effect in September 1994, and she was elected to the position of State Superintendent of Public Instruction in November 1994.

Wohlstetter (1991) argued that "success of educational reforms was tied directly to the political agendas and self interests of their legislative sponsors or champions" (p.289). Other legislators clearly recognized Graham-Keegan's self interest in the charter school policy. "The Superintendent of Public Instruction is a strong proponent of charter schools. As a matter of fact, I would say sometimes to the disadvantage of the non- charter schools" (House Education Committee Member Kathy Foster, March 24, 1998).

The Superintendent of Public Instruction had a place on both the State Board of Education and the State Board for Charter Schools. Observations of both boards recorded over three years verified that Graham-Keegan used her position as expert on these layperson-dominated boards to ensure that the legislative intent was preserved. (Note 7)

Moreover, in her capacity as CEO of the Department of Education, Graham-Keegan was able to make sure that her staff did not misconstrue the aims of the policy. Although the legislature had transferred authority away from this agency and withheld funding, Graham-Keegan took several additional steps. First, Keegan ran on a platform of cutting the bureaucracy within ADE. One of her first actions after the election was to initiate a major downsizing of staff at ADE. The year before she took office the Department of Education had 460 full-time staff members. By 1996, she reduced the number of full-time staff to 231 (personal communication, ADE Payroll Division, April 1998). However, the Department was unable to function effectively with such low staffing provisions, much to the concern of some Democratic legislators.

> Well, for one thing they [ADE] could add a few more staff people and they could keep them longer than six months. I don't think myself, I've called over there and gotten the same person twice. There's no continuity of staff at all." I think that speaks volumes of what's going on. (Senate Education Committee Member Mary Hartley, March 23, 1998)

However, legislators from the minority party were forgotten players in education policy, and only after school district leaders began to vociferously complain about the quality of services, did the numbers rise to 348 full-time staff by April 1998 (personal communication, ADE Payroll Division, April 1998). Consequently, fewer staff had

more responsibilities, further limiting the possibility for bureaucratic oversight of charter schools. Graham-Keegan took another explicit step in order to limit bureaucratic interference from ADE. She discouraged effective communication among the various divisions in the Department of Education. Her justification for this uncoordinated approach was as follows:

> Our main efforts are not to be to onerous on all schools. We don't have an internal structure of people who just focus on charter school issues. We have people from all departments dealing with the schools and don't isolate it anyway. We have specialists who work in various areas in all public schools. (Personal communication, Lisa Graham- Keegan, April 21, 1998)

The practical result to this uncoordinated approach to charter school oversight ensured that each unit within the Department had no idea what the other divisions were doing and gave rise to the belief, reiterated in interviews with ADE staff, that "somebody else must be looking at that." Keegan's position on the state sponsoring boards, a major staff reduction and persistent turnover, coupled with a lack of coordinated leadership, disabled the bureaucratic response to charters. These contextual factors, in addition to the explicit steps taken by legislators to transfer authority away from state agencies and limit funding, allowed the original aims of the charter school policy to remain intact during the state political to state bureaucratic linkage.

State Bureaucratic to Charter School Linkage

The final linkage in the charter school reform was from the state bureaucratic to the charter school level. The institutional distrust between political leaders and state level implementors was equally as strong among political leaders and local implementors. Selecting a system changing policy instrument transferred authority away from district administrators and teachers, much as it did with state level implementors. Similar to creating the state boards and appointing handpicked individuals, local implementors were recruited. Most of the charter school applicants participated in the Goldwater Institute's charter school project. Mary Gifford, a staff member at the Goldwater Institute during the early 1990s, said in a 1998 interview,

> We were integral in getting that legislation through in the summer of 1994, and then the Goldwater Institute launched a two-year charter school program, a project at that time. The first year [we] aimed at getting the word out on charter schools" setting up conferences, developing a how to apply type of manual, [and] trying to get as many qualified applicants as possible before the board so we could get charters up and running. (Mary Gifford, March 9, 1998)

Consequently, those at the school level were socialized early

on as to the intentions of state level policy makers. Some of the charter school directors were formerly district teachers who were frustrated with the constraining rules, regulations, and levels of bureaucracy. Others came from private industry and wanted to run their school like a business. Whatever the rationale, virtually all of the charter school directors attended the Goldwater seminars. Therefore, the individuals who were creating the policy at the point of implementation understood the intentions of policy authors; they would not have to endure the level of bureaucratic reporting as district public schools, but they would be forced to attract and maintain their student population. More importantly, individuals at the smallest unit had the capacity and will to implement these principles (McLaughlin, 1998). In addition to transferring authority away from district public school personnel and recruiting local implementors, the charter school policy also removed one linkage in the policy process. Traditionally policy is interpreted at the state department of education, the central district office, and finally it is passed along to schools within the district. However, in a charter school, the district and school are one in the same. Consequently, one potential linkage, where original aims could have been misconstrued or subverted, was averted with the charter school policy. In sum, local implementors were recruited, socialized and had the will to support the legislative intent.

Conclusion

The distortion of intentions for Arizona's charter school policy when put into practice was minimal, a finding at odds with most of the research on education (and social policy) implementation. From the literature, it appears that four variables influence successful policy implementation: communication, financial support, will, and bureaucratic structure (Edwards, 1980; McLaughlin, 1998; Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977). Arizona policy makers addressed all four features, significantly increasing the chances that the legislative intent, embodied in the charter school policy, would be preserved in practice.

First key Arizona legislators effectively communicated their intentions to state and local implementors. They did so by clearly articulating their intent to decrease the bureaucratic structure in statute. Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) §150183E obligates charter schools to comply with federal, state, and local rules, regulations, and statutes relating to the health, safety, civil rights, and insurance. In addition, charter schools must provide a non-sectarian, comprehensive curriculum and design a method to measure pupil progress. With the exception of the aforementioned requirements, charter schools are "exempt from all statutes and rules relating to schools, governing boards, and school districts" (ARS §15-183E5).

This blanket waiver liberated charter schools from over 1000 pages of rules and regulations by which district public schools must abide. Moreover, the specific responsibilities for the Office of the Auditor General were omitted in the charter school statute, and there was only a single vague reference to the role expectations for the Arizona Department of Education. By explicitly excluding a clear

description of the responsibilities for state regulatory agencies, policy makers reinforced their message of limited bureaucratic controls. Key legislators preserved their intent over the following four years by defeating proposals that would limit competition or increase reporting requirements for charter schools. Arizona policy makers were also acutely aware of the impact financial support would have on implementation efforts. To limit excessive bureaucratic oversight, they simply refused to appropriate funds for state level bureaucrats. The administrative staff for the State Board for Charter Schools through 1998 consisted of an Executive Director and one administrative assistant . (Note 8)

The State Board of Education staff was also very lean. During the first two years of the charter school program, the staff included an Executive Director and one secretary; the same staffing provision as before the state board gained charter school responsibilities. In November 1997, the SBE created a new position, Director of the Charter School Division for the State Board of Education, who was given all responsibilities for SBE sponsored charter schools. The simple yet effective strategy of withholding funds for administrative staff also thwarted the efforts of the Arizona Department of Education and the Office of the Auditor General to bureaucratically monitor Arizona charter schools. The attitudes of individuals implementing policy were a third critical influence, which affected successful implementation. Arizona policy makers transferred authority away from state and local implementors who lacked the "appropriate" attitude toward the charter school policy. Republican legislators understood that many local implementors were hostile to the charter school idea. District school administrators were threatened by the potential loss of students and funding. District school teachers felt the charter schools were a way to deteriorate inroads made by the teachers unions. Consequently, individuals from non-traditional backgrounds (e.g., the military, health care, private schools and industry) were recruited to run the public charter schools.

The same technique was used at the state level. The Department of Education lost some of their authority when charter schools were granted a blanket waiver from the rules, regulations, and reporting requirements established for district schools. This authority was assumed by two "charter friendly" boards. The State Board of Education, where all members were appointed by pro-school choice governors and the State Board for Charter Schools, where the main criteria for membership was a strong disposition toward increasing school choice. Transferring authority to individuals who had a favorable inclination towards the policy intent dramatically decreased the chance of slippage.

Finally, organizational fragmentation at the Arizona Department of Education, combined with minimal bureaucratic structure for the state level sponsoring boards ensured that the policy intent was preserved in the working program. Lisa Graham-Keegan, the author of the charter school bill, had an unusually large amount of power over the implementation of the policy and proved to be a key actor in preserving the original aims. In her capacity as Superintendent

of Public Instruction, Graham-Keegan had a seat on both state sponsoring boards and was able to influence the behavior of board members who deferred to her judgment. Her position also allowed her to constrain the actions of bureaucrats at the Arizona Department of Education.

The intent of the Arizona charter school policy was preserved through a series of purposefully employed policy instruments and reinforced by a supportive contextual environment. Policy makers created a system- changing reform, which successfully transferred authority away from state and district level personnel, both of whom had historically altered legislative intent. Hall (1995) stated, "Policy production is a very complex process requiring much integration and coordination. It depends on the collective activity of many actors.... There are many places for contingency and numerous opportunities for altering the patterns of the past and context" (p.409). Arizona policy makers were able to maximize the potential for the preservation of their intentions by their explicit actions to produce a policy that limited bureaucratic oversight and neutralized the influence of policy actors who traditionally play key roles in shaping policy in practice.

Notes

1. For a more thorough review of the implementation research see Elmore & Sykes, 1992; Fuhrman, Clune & Elmore, 1988; or McLaughlin, 1998).
2. See also Kaufman 1972; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975; or Edwards, 1980 for a further discussion on the character of implementors.
3. These two state entities were responsible for approving new schools as well as general oversight.
4. For example, business leaders tend to favor the market-based nature of the reform. Conversely, teacher organizations favor the reform because it provides teachers with more autonomy.
5. For example, amendments that would increase reporting requirements or restrict the choices of customers would run counter to the spirit of the legislation.
6. All of the members were appointed by pro school choice Republican Governors. Although their position on this issue was not the main criterion for appointment, as it was with the members serving on the SBCS.
7. Although Keegan was never a professional educator, board members repeatedly deferred to her judgment because of her position as Superintendent of Public Instruction.
8. The SBCS had five Executive Directors in the first three years of the charter school program.

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Homeschooling and the Redefinition of Citizenship

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Abstract
Homeschooling has grown considerably in many countries over the past two or three decades. To date, most research has focused either on comparisons between schooled and homeschooled children, or on finding out why parents choose to educate their children at home. There has been little consideration of the importance of homeschooling for the more general issue of citizenship, and whether people can be good citizens without going to school. This paper reviews the research on homeschooling, as well as the major objections to it, and frames these debates within the broader issues of citizenship and citizenship education. The paper shows that homeschoolers are carving out a different but equally valid understanding of citizenship and that policies which encourage a diversity of understandings of good citizenship should form the basis citizenship education both for schools and homeschoolers.

Introduction

There has been a heightened interest in homeschooling in both popular and academic circles in recent years. The numbers of homeschoolers across North America, Australia and Western Europe have grown significantly over the past two decades (Knowles, Marlow and Muchmore, 1992; Thomas, 1998), and this growth shows no sign of abating. The number of "how-to" manuals has exploded, as has the number of support groups and regional, national and international support organizations.

Most of the debates about homeschooling have been framed as primarily educational issues. For example, the most common theme in discussions of homeschooling is whether or not homeschooled kids are disadvantaged in the education they receive, versus children who attend regular school (Rudner, 1999). Other issues which have received significant attention are the legality of the practice (Marlow, 1994), the motivations of parents to homeschool (Knowles, 1991; Mayberry, 1988; Mayberry and Knowles, 1989), and the different ways in which homeschooling is accomplished (Mayberry, 1993; Thomas, 1998). In most of these discussions, the implications of homeschooling for citizenship are downplayed in favour of educational or methodological concerns.

However, the broader issue of the place of homeschooling in contemporary democratic societies can be better understood as a more fundamental debate about the nature of citizenship, and the place of the school as a major agent of socialization in the construction of citizens. In short, most of the concerns about and objections to homeschooling are worries about whether homeschooled children will grow up to be good citizens.

This paper begins with an overview of the major objections to homeschooling, and how these objections can be seen as concerns about citizenship. The next section summarizes international trends in citizenship education in schools, especially the concept of multidimensional citizenship. This is followed by a review of the international evidence on homeschooling, and how homeschoolers are implicitly creating a different vision of citizenship by keeping their children out of school. Finally, some policy implications, for schools and for homeschoolers, are outlined.

Objections to homeschooling

When parents decide to homeschool their children, they face many hurdles. These include self-doubt about their decision, worries about the reactions of family and friends, bureaucratic interference from school officials, and sometimes even problems with the legality of their decision, depending on how they choose to pursue homeschooling and the laws of their jurisdiction (Marlow, 1994; Mayberry, et al., 1995). But the most common question which homeschoolers hear, from bureaucrats, educators, teachers, family and friends alike is, "What about socialization?" (Holt, 1981; 1983)

Socialization

The "socialization question", as it is known among homeschoolers, is actually an omnibus inquiry which usually leads more specific questions. Homeschooled parents are often asked questions like, "Don't you worry that your kids will grow up to be weird?", "How will you prepare them for the real world?", or, "Will they be able to get job?" These are really concerns about homeschoolers not participating in one of our most important institutions of proper socialization. It is useful to break this larger question about socialization down into its major components.

The inability to cope. One of the interpretations of the socialization question is that students who are homeschooled will not be able to cope with the harsh realities of life beyond their family environment (see Luffman, 1997). In school, the argument goes, children learn valuable skills such as the ability to work with others, to handle interpersonal conflicts, work in groups or teams and to make personal sacrifices for the betterment of the group. These are vital skills later in life. Homeschooled children, who will not necessarily acquire these skills because of the protective cocoon of the home, will then be at a disadvantage when they grow up. (Menendez, 1996).

A different version of the same argument is that homeschooled children will be unprepared for the harsh and competitive nature of the labour market. They will then turn to government assistance, their parents, or a life on the margins of society in an attempt to reproduce the utopian bubble in which they were raised. In either version, parents are doing their children a great disservice by not giving them the opportunity to learn these skills at school. This quickly leads to a conclusion about the desirability of compulsory schooling, which will be addressed later. But the point here is that without school, and the valuable "job skills" it teaches, homeschooled children will not be willing or able to compete with their schooled counterparts (Pfleger, 1998; see also Webb, 1989).

In addition to job skills, schools teach children a great deal about social expectations (Pfleger, 1998). Standards of behaviour, dress, etiquette and morality are all powerfully reinforced through schooling. That is, school "normalizes" people because they learn important social norms and their sanctions, even if they choose not to follow them. School provides a kind of "informed consent" in that people who choose to ignore social prescriptions do so in full awareness of the penalties that they will likely encounter. Homeschooled children do not receive this majoritarian filtering of norms, but are more likely to pick up their parents idiosyncratic understandings of the world. They will again be disadvantaged because they will not realize what constitutes conforming and unconforming behaviour once they leave the family and enter the wider society (see Taylor, 1986).

Bias and narrow curricular content. A second issue which is sometimes referred to by the socialization question is whether or not parents can provide their children with a sufficiently broad education. In school, critics argue, children are exposed to many different

teachers, each with their own areas of expertise. No parent, no matter how intelligent and dedicated, could possibly provide this breadth of understanding for their children. The necessary conclusion, if these premisses are valid, is that schooled children receive a better education than homeschooled children (Menendez, 1996). Many of these critics will admit though that homeschooled children receive much more individual attention than children in school, and that this may offset some of the advantages of having many teachers.

The problem of bias and narrow curricular content is more serious when parents deliberately set out to teach their children a "distorted" or erroneous view of the world. This claim is usually reserved for those people who keep their children out of school because they want to teach them a dogmatic view of the world, such as a belief in creationism. Occasionally, people who try to instill "new age" values or beliefs in their children are accused of bias. There are two problems with people who teach their kids a distorted view of the world according to this argument.

First, there is the problem that these parents know full well what the dominant social attitudes, beliefs and understandings are, and they have deliberately chosen to teach their kids something else. These people are not good citizens because they are purposefully flouting established conventions and disadvantaging their children in the process (Menendez, 1996). The second problem is related to the problem of the inability of homeschooled children to cope in the real world. Because these kids have been fed a biased and inaccurate view of the world, they will not fit into the wider society when they are forced to live on their own. If these homeschoolers are returned to school at some point, it is the school system and taxpayers who have to provide the resources to correct mistakes made by the parents (Pfleger, 1998).

Lack of exposure to others. A final major thread of the socialization objection to homeschooling is that homeschooled children do not receive enough exposure to other people and their distinctive ways of life. Especially in this era of many cultures, schools teach students from extremely diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. All students benefit from this diversity because they learn about other ways of life, and the values of tolerance, difference and novelty. Homeschoolers on the other hand, do not receive this exposure because they are cooped up in the home. Not only is this a less enriching environment, but it can undermine social cooperation if homeschoolers do not learn the value of tolerance of others. Homeschooling, according to this argument, runs the danger of producing a less unified culture, including people with higher levels of prejudice than if everyone went to school (Menendez, 1996).

All of these criticisms about the lack of socialization for homeschooled versus schooled children are primarily about what schools teach beyond the regular curriculum. That is, the value of tolerance and cooperation, an awareness of the dominant culture, and a broad perspective on life are not things which are taught directly, but which children learn in order to participate in the formal lessons of school. So these are things that homeschoolers cannot teach their

children by simply picking up a book and lecturing out of it. These are "life skills" which can be taught most effectively through school because of its communal organization.

Elitism

Homeschoolers have also been accused of being elitist. The argument takes one of two forms. The first one is that the current public system is in disarray, but parents have a duty to try to improve that system to make it better for all children. Taking a child out of school may be fine for that one student, but it does nothing to improve the situation for all of the other children who are left in school. Homeschooling then, is an ungenerous act because those parents who choose it are shirking their duty to the other families who stay in the system (Menendez, 1996). In addition, if middle and upper class parents leave the school, this removes active and concerned parents who might otherwise fight for improvements. Occasionally, this criticism takes on a class or ethnic dimension as well. That is, homeschooling may be a viable solution to poor schools for middle and upper class families with a stay-at-home parent, but it is not an option for the lower classes where both parents must work in order to survive. Since ethnic minorities are over-represented in the lower classes, homeschooling is a way for ethnic elites to protect the education of their own children while abandoning children from other ethnic backgrounds.

A second version of the elitism criticism of homeschooling is that homeschooling can only be done by parents with high levels of education. The argument is that homeschooling may work for the well-educated elites because they have the ability to teach their kids at home. But for people who don't have high levels of education, they must rely on the public school system (Menendez, 1996). Again, this is a way for elites to maintain privilege. The interesting thing about both versions of the elitist argument is that its implications for the public school system contrast sharply with the socialization arguments above. In the socialization arguments, school was seen as superior to homeschooling while in the elitist argument school is viewed as inferior to the home, at least for elites.

Higher education

Another worry of critics of homeschooling is that homeschooled kids will be disadvantaged in their abilities to apply for post-secondary education opportunities. This criticism is different from all of the other criticisms because it is a concern that is shared by homeschoolers. The argument from the critics is that homeschoolers will not have the credentials (namely a high school or equivalent diploma) to apply for college, trade school or university. Therefore, homeschooled children will be forced either to go to school anyway to earn these credentials, or to demonstrate their abilities through some other means. This can prove difficult because most post-secondary institutions have little or no experience or interest in evaluating the

qualifications of homeschooled applicants. Again, the criticism is that children will be punished for unwise parental decisions.

Citizenship and choice in education

All of the above criticisms of homeschooling are really concerns about parental choice in education, and the conflict between parental rights and state rights in education Worries about coping in the real world, getting along with others, working for the common good rather than individual privilege and being able to contribute to society through higher education are all based on a vision of what good citizens do. Because of this, they are also concerns about citizenship and whether or not homeschoolers will fit into the larger society in the proper ways.

One of the most sophisticated arguments against parental choice in education, including the choice to homeschool, is Eammon Callan's (1997) Creating Citizens: Political Education and Liberal Democracy (see also Callan,1995). Callan's argument stems from the ongoing debates in political philosophy concerning the nature of rights, democracy, rationality, fairness and justice, and how we can construct schools which promote these principles. He argues that a true common school, in which all students receive a common curriculum, with some reasonable departures, provides the best way of ensuring a vibrant sense of citizenship among present and future generations. This sense of citizenship is built around the virtues of a critical tolerance of diversity, the power of rational thought and argument, and commitment to a defensible moral code. Citizens who develop these graces will have an understanding of the world which will give them the freedom to choose how they live their life, which is the ultimate aim of the liberal democratic state. Moreover, it is through common schooling that these attributes are best developed. As Callan wrote,

> Schooling is likely the most promising institutional vehicle for that understanding since the other, extra-familial social influences that impinge heavily on childrens' and adolescents' lives--peer groups, the mass media of communication and entertainment--do not readily lend themselves to that end (Callan, 1997, p. 133).

Callan has in mind a very particular form of schooling here which he refers to as "schooling as the great sphere" (Callan, 1997, p. 134). This is a form of schooling in which children are helped to explore the world and in the process they acquire the abilities to decide for themselves how and where they wish to live in that world. Callan further argues that schooling as the great sphere should be mandatory for all children, except in some clearly defined circumstances. The reason is that the preservation of a liberal democratic state depends on it. As he wrote,

> The need to perpetuate fidelity to liberal democratic institutions and values from one generation to another

> suggests that there are some inescapably shared educational aims, even if the pursuit of these conflicts with the convictions of some citizens. (Callan, 1997, p. 9)

This is reminiscent of the early mandate of public education systems to provide the people of the country with the skills to allow them to become proper citizens (Wong, 1997). The key question concerning homeschooling, then, is when is it permissible to not send a child to a common school. Callan has argued that parents have a right to keep their children out of school in only two circumstances. The first is when a parent's right to freedom of association with their children would be jeopardized by sending them to school. If the teachings of the common school would so alienate a parent from a child that they could no longer sustain an adequate parent-child relationship, then the state must allow these parents to keep their children out of a common school. The second situation is when a community creates a separate educational system which helps preserve the integrity of that community. For example, if a distinct community was able to construct a set of educational institutions, and these institutions were necessary to preserve the integrity of that community, then the state should grant children in that community an exemption from the common school. The example he uses is an Amish community that cannot preserve its integrity if its children attend a common school.

However, Callan is clear that these are very unusual circumstances, and exemptions are only to be granted after careful scrutiny of each case. One cannot keep their child out of school simply because they think it is in the best interests of the child to do so. He explicitly argues that parents do not have the right to reject great sphere schooling for their children. The reason is that this would interfere with the child's future "zone of personal sovereignty" (Callan, 1997:155) by keeping the child "ethically servile" (Callan, 1997:155) to her or his parents. Children who are ethically servile to their parents are those who have been raised in "ignorant antipathy" toward all points of view other than that of their parents. In other words, parents do not have the right to keep their children out of a common, great sphere school because they could be brainwashed into believing in only their parents very limited view of the world. This is not only harmful for the child so brainwashed, but also for the larger society. As Callan wrote,

> Large moral losses are incurred by permitting parents to rear their children in disregard of the minima of political education and their children's right to an education that protects their prospective interest in sovereignty (Callan, 1997, p. 176).

Further, he argues that, "Those who would argue for the right of parents to veto the great sphere are effectively demanding a right to keep their children ethically servile" (Callan, 1997, p. 155). In Callan's argument, the personal rights of the child are connected with state

rights to the preservation of liberal democracy to cancel out parental rights to make choices about their children's education. There appears to be little room in his proposal for homeschooling. Homeschooling would only seem possible under extreme circumstances when parents would be at risk of losing their relationship with their children, or if they happened to belong to a community in which homeschooling was the chosen method of preserving a distinctive way of life. But since the reason for requiring attendance at school is to help create good citizens, the issue becomes what sort of citizenship education children receive in school.

Citizenship and citizenship education

The concept of citizenship is interesting because while there is general agreement about some of the elements which form a core definition of the concept, there is wide disagreement about its final composition, and which elements should receive more prominence than others. Most understandings of citizenship include some combination of five elements: group identification; rights or entitlements; responsibilities or duties; public participation, and; common values (Derricott, et al., 1998; Touraine, 1997; Callan, 1997). Various models of citizenship have been proposed and debated (see Delanty, 1997 for a good review of the major positions), but there is no single vision of citizenship which is acceptable to all. Perhaps this is not surprising given that citizenship is a fundamentally political concept. Similarly, there are many different proposals about the nature and content of citizenship education.

Starting with the earliest ideas of citizenship, there was an important distinction between good people and good citizens in ancient Greece. Good people lived their lives according to a set of legitimate moral principles, but good citizens carried the additional burden of participating actively in the public life of the society (Cogan, 1998). And this participation required a certain level of education.

With the development of industrial capitalism and the rise of public education, the school became a primary site for citizenship education (McKenzie, 1993). Early versions of citizenship education in most countries stressed several elements including nationalism and national history, individual rights and responsibilities and factual information about a country's geography and systems of governance (MacKenzie, 1993; Wong, 1997). In many cases, schools continued to emphasize one's duty to participate in the public life of the society. In these early years, participation meant not only following political events and voting in elections (if one had the right to vote) but also working within the local and church communities to which one belonged. That is, children were taught that they have a duty to work actively to improve the conditions of life for themselves and others in their immediate environment (Fogelman, 1991; Wong, 1997).

Over time, more and more emphasis was placed on "civics," or the facts about a country's political system, and less attention was paid to participation and community identification, beyond formal political

participation in elections. In many countries, citizenship education was confined to history courses, and later to social studies courses (McKenzie, 1993; Wong, 1997). This led to the teaching of a more formalistic understanding of citizenship, one which stressed rights and responsibilities rather than participation and group identification. When participation was stressed, the fear was that it was incomplete and did not result in strong bonds between individuals and their communities. As Touraine (1997:146) says, "In today's mass society, everyone talks of participation; but participation tends to mean dissolving into what David Riesman called "The Lonely Crowd"". In other words, in many schools participation was a rather vacuous moral injunction to be publicly involved. This has begun to change with the development of "community service" elements in many curriculums (Cogan and Derricott, 1998; Fogelman, 1991; MacKenzie, 1993). Schools appear to be rediscovering that participation in the daily events of life are important for the education of proper citizens.

Fogelman has shown that although citizenship education has stressed public involvement, there is a clear difference between the attitudes and behaviours of students. In a survey of British students, many of them reported that public involvement, especially in helping others, is important but very few students were actually involved in these activities. For example, the percentage of students who thought charitable work (e.g., helping the elderly or the disabled, preserving the environment) was important ranged between 37% and 71%, but only 6 to 12% of students were actually involved in these activities (Fogelman, 1991).

Multidimensional citizenship

Kubow, Grossman and Ninoyama (1998) and others (Cogan and Derricott, 1998) have recently articulated an idea of "multidimensional citizenship" Multidimensional citizenship for them has four components, the personal, the social, the temporal and the spatial, which encourage students to reflect on their own behaviour, their relations with others both locally and globally, and their relationships to the past and the future. Multidimensional citizenship is based on the principles of toleration of and cooperation with others, non-violent conflict resolution, rational argument and debate, environmentalism, respect for human rights, and participation in civic life. This vision of citizenship, they argue, must become the philosophical foundation for schools of the future.

Kubow et al. (1998) argue that in the personal dimension, compulsory schooling should develop a personal sense of virtue in all students and that this cannot be done in isolated courses. Rather, the school must be a model of virtue in all respects, from the behaviour of teachers, administrators and students to the place of the school in the life of the community. Schools should provide students with opportunities to integrate into their communities in numerous ways to foster proper attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, other social institutions such as families, churches and volunteer organizations must help schools achieve this mission by reinforcing the principles of

multidimensional citizenship.

The inculcation of virtue through schooling is a theme that also runs through Callan's (1997) ideas, as well as those of others such as Holmes (1995). For example, Callan stresses that contemporary common schools can and should promote "virtue" in their students, and Holmes wants major changes to the school system so that they can build "character" in pupils. In both cases, these goods cannot be taught simply in history or social studies courses, but must be an integral principle upon which an adequate school is founded. Moreover, character and virtue involve more than adherence to the values of respect for the law, tolerance of others and non-violent conflict resolution, but must also include a belief in the power of rational thought and argument, and a constant search for the good, the true and the right.

The social element of multidimensional citizenship encompasses the active commitment of citizens to participate in "civil society" which is not simply a formal political space. Rather civil society takes in a much broader range of actions including everything from public highway clean-ups to parades, and the use of public spaces to running for political office. The energetic participation of all people in these actions is a primary goal of education for multidimensional citizenship. The spatial element forces us to think of our place in the world, but not giving any one reference an exclusive claim on our identities. Rather, we need to recognize that we are all pulled in many directions by spatial and other affinities, and that we do not have to choose one at the expense of others. So for example, one can be a North American and an environmentalist at the same time, without any necessary contradiction. Finally, the temporal dimension encourages us to think about our place in the march of time. We need to recognize that our actions are shaped by those who preceded us, and that we have a responsibility to those who will come after us.

All four elements need to be developed and explicitly recognized in school curricula, according to Kubow et al. (1998). One of the interesting things about the idea of multidimensional citizenship is that the four dimensions all involve many different skills and values, and people may combine aspects of the four elements in many ways to produce different, but no less valid, forms of citizenship. For example, citizenship for some people might include a very strong environmental commitment which for them means a focus on internationalization and globalization as the basis of environmental problems. For others, environmentalism means cleaning up the chemical waste from a local factory. In multidimensional citizenship, both of these incarnations are valid. We are not required to agree on one and only one vision of the good citizen.

Homeschooling seems to have little place in any of the above discussions of the relationship between citizenship and education. In all cases, schools are argued to have an important, even primary role in the cultivation of new citizens, and in some cases, it is argued that parents do not even have the right to exempt their children from this education. Yet the number of homeschoolers in most countries continues to grow. The key issue then is whether homeschoolers pose

a threat to citizenship because they do not go to school. That is, do homeschoolers make good citizens? In the following section, I will argue that the answer to this question is "yes", but there are important differences between the vision of citizenship promoted in schools and that found among homeschoolers.

Homeschooling

Homeschoolers have responded to the above charges of not being good citizens, and have begun to create a different understanding of citizenship through their actions. The counter arguments to the charges of lack of socialization, elitism, post-secondary qualifications and parental rights to choice in education reveal that homeschoolers do not accept the assumption that schools are a primary agent in the construction of all good citizens. Further, the majority of them do not want to isolate themselves from the larger society, as is commonly presumed. Rather, they seek meaningful integration into the society, and in doing so, have come to produce a different but equally valid understanding of citizenship.

Socialization

Homeschoolers have been charged with failing to provide their children with the tools necessary to cope in the wider world. The contention of this criticism is that school provides this wisdom. However, homeschoolers recognize that school is not the only means by which children learn coping skills, nor is it necessarily the best. Homeschooled children, far from being isolated in their homes, are often heavily involved in sports, music, church and wilderness groups (i.e., scouts and guides) outside the home (Mayberry et al., 1995; Ray, 1994; Thomas, 1998; Knowles, 1998). To play on sports teams, in an band, or be a member of a Guide troop requires that children learn how to interact with others, which means they need to learn the values of tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation. Homeschooling parents contend that their children learn the supposed coping skills in these activities, so learning them at school is unnecessary.

Some homeschooling parents react to this criticism more harshly, arguing that the supposed coping skills learned in school are simply unintended consequences of the communal organization of schools. Moreover, parents also provide instruction in these skills and values, so it is erroneous for schools to claim all of the credit for these abilities (Gatto, 1997). It is not the case that just because a child is homeschooled that he or she will not learn what is necessary for proper interpersonal interaction.

The charge of bias and narrow curricular content has also been addressed by homeschoolers. The criticism depends, they argue, on the assumption that all teachers are unbiased, or that their biases offset one another. This is unlikely according to homeschooling parents, so there is no necessary reason to think that children in school will receive an unbiased education. In addition, many parents use standardized curriculums and/or also make extensive use of public and

college/university libraries in their home education, which reduces potential bias and idiosyncrasy (Ray, 1994; 1997).

The criticism of narrow mindedness is most serious when parents set out to indoctrinate their children in a particular world view. For example, if some homeschooling parents wanted to ensure that their kids believed that the world was flat, set out to teach them this, and made sure that no other views contaminated this truth, most people would rightly have a problem with this approach. However, homeschoolers view this as a parenting problem, not a homeschooling problem (Sheffer, 1997). They argue that children can be indoctrinated into malicious or erroneous world views even if they attend school, and that it is up to their critics to show that indoctrination is more likely in homeschooling than in public education. For example, homeschoolers contend that most racists have attended school. Raising bigoted, intolerant or violent children then can be done as easily if they attend school as if they stay home.

Homeschooling parents have responded to the charge that their children do not receive sufficient exposure to others in two main ways. First, they claim that their children do get exposure to others through their other activities such as sports and music, as noted above. Second, many of them also claim that the exposure to diversity that kids actually receive in school is probably over emphasized because schools demand a high level of conformity in the first place. The organization and structure of schools requires that diversity fit into specific patterns such as the daily schedule of classes and extra-curricular activities. Also, in school children have little opportunity to interact with people who are not almost exactly the same age, thereby robbing them of the ability to learn from those older and younger than themselves. Therefore, real exposure to other ways of life probably does not happen in school, according to many homeschoolers (Thomas,1998).

Elitism

Some homeschoolers are understandably upset at the suggestion that they are being elitist by keeping their kids at home. This is especially true of the selfish version where homeschoolers are perceived to be abandoning the public education system and the kids who remain in it. Although homeschooling is usually a response to problems or perceived problems at school (Knowles, 1991), they recognize that home education is not for everyone. They wish only to be accorded the same respect for their decision as is given to parents who decide to send their kids to school.

As for being part of the elite, homeschooling families, from the many surveys that have been done, are not part of the financial elite, although the large majority of them are white (Mayberry et al., 1995; Ray, 1994; 1997). And while there are problems with all of these surveys (see Welner and Welner, 1999 for a summary of problems which apply to these as well as other surveys of homeschoolers), they all show homeschooling families to have an average or slightly below average level of family income, and slightly higher levels of education

in comparison with the general population. However, homeschoolers are quick to point out that home education can and is being done by parents with very low levels of education as well. Indeed, many home educating parents would find it ironic if they had to attend school just so their kids could stay home.

Higher education

Homeschooling parents as noted above are as worried about their children's chances of entering post-secondary institutions as are some critics of homeschooling. Their response has usually been one of planning, and trying to find out what institutions would require while there is still time for their kids to acquire the necessary credentials or documentation (Ray, 1994; 1997). For example, if getting into university requires a high school diploma, many homeschooled kids will end up spending a year or more in school, or taking correspondence courses, to get the diploma. Homeschoolers point out that this has the unintentional benefit of forcing these teenagers to think about what they want to do and then work toward that goal instead of just finishing school and then choosing among the options that happen to be available.

Other homeschoolers are unwilling to attend school or take correspondence courses, and try to change the entry requirements of post-secondary institutions. Some homeschoolers approach college and university registrars and try to convince them that they are qualified for admission without the regular high school diploma. The success of this approach of course depends very heavily on the persuasive abilities of the student, and probably more importantly the regulatory context within which the institution must work. In some jurisdictions (for example, in most provinces in Canada) colleges and universities receive government funding only for students who meet specific entrance criteria which usually includes a high school diploma or recognized equivalent. Universities do not receive funding for students who do not meet these criteria, so there is no incentive to accept these students.

Homeschooling and citizenship

Moving beyond homeschoolers responses to criticisms levelled at them to the larger body of research on homeschooling, there is evidence to suggest that homeschoolers appear to be involved in a process of constructing an alternative vision of citizenship for them and their children, albeit largely implicitly. Consistent with the notion of multidimensional citizenship, homeschoolers are involved in combining a different mix of attributes to become good citizens. In particular, they emphasize participation and the importance of family as the basis of a different definition of citizenship.

In school, citizenship education emphasizes history, geography and social studies lessons, with some limited participation in extra-curricular activities both inside and outside the school. However, as Fogelman (1991) shows, the amount of extra-curricular

participation is limited. For homeschoolers, participation in the public sphere is a more important component of their education. They are much more involved in things like volunteer work than schooled children, which also further offsets socialization criticisms. For example, Ray (1994: 1999) found that over 30% of homeschooled kids 5 years old or older in both the US and Canada were actively involved in volunteer work, compared to the 6 to 12% found by Fogelman for schooled kids.

In other activities, homeschooled kids also exhibit high participation levels, although perhaps not any higher than schooled children. In the same surveys noted above, Ray found that 98% of homeschooled kids in the US were involved in 2 or more regular activities outside the home (Ray, 1999) and that Canadian homeschoolers had an average of almost 9 hours per week of contact with non- family adults and over 12 hours per week of contact with non-sibling children (Ray, 1994). And while the generalizability of these results must be treated with some caution, there is some evidence to substantiate the claim that homeschooled kids are very involved in activities outside the home. This suggests that homeschooled kids and their parents are keen to integrate into the wider society rather than pulling back from it, as is commonly presumed.

Mayberry and Knowles (1989), Knowles (1991) and Mayberry (1988) have also shown that "family unity" is a major factor in many parents' decisions to educate their kids at home. They feel that homeschooling promotes or at least allows them to have much stronger relationships with their children than would be possible if they went to school. These parents feel that these strong relationships are important not just for them but for two important characteristics in their children as well.

First, children with strong family relationships have the confidence to explore the world in challenging and sometimes unconventional ways. For instance, Thomas (1998) suggests that strong family bonds allow children to learn at their own pace, to maintain a heightened level of curiosity and to be involved in intense learning processes. As he says, "At home, on the other hand, children spend most of their time at the frontiers of their learning. Their parents are fully aware of what they already know and of the next step to be learned. Learning is therefore more demanding and intensive" (Thomas, 1998, p. 46).

Homeschooling parents also feel that a strong family will give their children the ability and the confidence to be more independent and to think for themselves. Indeed, raising kids who are willing and able to think for themselves is a primary goal many homeschooling parents (Knowles, 1991; Thomas, 1998). There is also some evidence to suggest that homeschooled kids see their relationships with their families as crucial to their own independence (Sheffer, 1997). It may be the case then that some homeschoolers would fall under Callan's "freedom of association" exemption from mandatory great sphere schooling. That is, strong family bonds, whether they are the motivation for or an effect of homeschooling could be jeopardized by not allowing parents the right to homeschool.

The strong bonds in homeschooling families are also thought to be the basis of deliberate and informed participation in the larger society, especially later in life (Sheffer, 1997). Many homeschooling parents find the level of consumerism and/or materialism in the "dominant society" to be too high and they want their kids to be able to resist these intense pressures. Some homeschooling parents have pulled their kids out of school because of the peer pressure and the availability of drugs and alcohol, while others mentioned that the pressure to be part of the "in crowd" was antithetical to the way they wished to raise their children (Marshall and Valle, 1996). Homeschooling then, is a way to live out a lifestyle which is somewhat different from the norm and to raise their children to make their own decisions about how they wish to live. In other words, these parents share Callan's vision of raising and educating children to make informed and reasonable choices about their lives.

Policy Implications

While the form and content of citizenship education among homeschoolers is clearly different from what children receive in school, it is not an inferior experience. Homeschoolers, in other words, can be good citizens. Here I have argued that homeschoolers, despite being accused of not being good citizens, are actually engaged in a process of defining their own vision of what it means to be a citizen. They clearly do not believe that compulsory schooling is a necessary prerequisite of adequate citizenship and they prefer to stress the importance of family and participation in public activities as the basis of their understanding of the good citizen. The key issue now is what this implies for educational policies about homeschooling and compulsory schooling.

The major implication for compulsory schooling in this paper is that schools cannot be the only, or even the primary, agent of citizenship education for all children. Homeschooled kids can be good citizens, even if their vision of citizenship is somewhat different than that taught in schools. This undermines the arguments that schooling should be compulsory for all children in order to preserve "democracy", and that wanting a right to not send children to a common school is necessarily to want to keep them ethically servile. Most homeschooled children and their parents, just like most schooled children and their parents, are fervent supporters of democracy and have no interest in ethical servility.

Schooling is not an antidote to ethical servility, and policies surrounding the compulsory nature of school should be re-examined in light of this. Specifically, the need to educate all children to be good citizens has always been a cornerstone of mandatory schooling policies, so if these policies are to be retained, they need to account for the fact that children can become good citizens without going to school. This is not to suggest that a rationale for compulsory schooling is impossible, but only that it cannot be based primarily on constructing good citizens.

As for the content of citizenship education which is taught in

schools, the argument in this paper is consistent with policies which would continue to build on the importance of participation as a crucial element of citizenship education. This would not only help to legitimate the definition of citizenship being modelled by homeschoolers, but would also close the gap between what is taught in school and what is taught by home educators.

Further, schools should continue to pursue policy initiatives which promote multidimensional citizenship. Schools need to recognize that there is no one best version of being a good citizen, but that there are many valid interpretations of an ideal member of society. Moreover, multidimensional citizenship suggests that becoming a citizen is a constant process, and that people's ideas about good citizenship can change. Perhaps all educators, including those who teach at home, need to consider multidimensional citizenship as an important component of helping children become citizens.

Finally, it is clear that there are no guarantees for creating good citizens. Homeschoolers have an alternative and very powerful understanding of citizenship, but this does not mean that we should relinquish all citizenship education in schools, or that schools should adopt the vision of citizenship shared by many homeschoolers. This is no more a cure for poor citizenship than is forcing everyone to take civics classes. Rather we need to recognize and evaluate the validity of alternative definitions of citizenship, and to recognize that it does not have to be taught at school.

For homeschoolers, the policy implications are a little less clear, because they are much less likely to have a "policy" on citizenship education than are schools. However, homeschoolers should recognize that there are good elements to citizenship education in schools as well. For example, basic facts of national history and governance are often very important for informed participation in a democracy. Most of the people that homeschooled kids will encounter later in life will have this understanding, and those people will presume that homeschoolers have it as well. Homeschoolers need to be prepared to deal with these expectations, either by acquiring the relevant knowledge or convincing others of the validity of their experiences.

In addition, homeschooling parents and children must recognize that they are not just keeping their kids at home, and that they are not just making a statement about parental rights in education. Rather, they are also helping to define and shape what it means to be a citizen of their country. They must be prepared to think in these broader terms, and to recognize that what they are doing has some good elements and some bad elements, just as citizenship education in schools has strengths and weaknesses. In other words, homeschooling is not just about where kids will learn their ABCs, it affects the very definition of what it means to be a member of a society.

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Project Hope and the Hope School System in China: A Re-evaluation

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Abstract

I investigate the creation, development, contributions and limits of Project Hope, a huge government-endorsed education project seeking non-governmental contributions to overcome educational inadequacy in poverty-stricken rural communities in transitional China. By reexamining the composition of sponsored students, the locations of Hope Primary Schools and non-educational orientations for building and expanding schools, I argue that Project Hope and its Hope School system have not contributed to educational access, equality, equity, efficiency and quality as it should have. Poverty-reduction-oriented curriculum requirements in Hope Primary Schools are theoretically misleading and realistically problematic.

Introduction

Introduction

According to what is published on the official homepage of the China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF), the founder of Project Hope, "[Project Hope's] mission is to raise much-needed funds for the improvement of educational conditions in China's poor areas and promote youth development in China. Its goal is to safeguard the educational rights of children in poor areas. In line with government policy of raising educational funds from a variety of sources, Project Hope mobilizes Chinese and foreign materials and financial resources to help bring dropouts back to school, to improve educational facilities and to promote primary education in China's poverty- stricken areas" (CYDF 1996a).

Seeking non-governmental financial and physical support in both China and overseas for the improvement of primary education in economically underdeveloped regions in China, Project Hope tries to help enroll in school those school age children who can not go to school or drop out of school because of poverty. It tries to improve the educational conditions, the classroom and school facilities in particular in underdeveloped rural areas. Furthermore, Project Hope tries to contribute to poverty reduction in local areas by contributing agricultural and technical knowledge and skills to the curricula and instruction of its Hope Primary Schools and encouraging the schools' participation in business operations (Yue, 1991; Huang, C. 1994; Tou, Cheng and Huang 1995).

Project Hope has sponsored the schooling of tens of thousands of children in poor areas. To date, it has sponsored the construction and renovation of over 5,000 primary schools in poor areas (Guangmin Daily 1997; CYDF 1998). As a non-governmental charitable project, it has special political and educational legitimacy, power, and influence in China. The phrase "Project Hope" has become a household word among the Chinese people.

This article traces the origins and development of Project Hope and the Hope Primary School system, which are marked by high politicization and bureaucratization, and investigates their contribution to the development of rural basic education. By examining the demographics of sponsored students, the locations of Hope Primary Schools and non- educational orientations for building and expanding schools, I argue that Project Hope and the Hope School System have not contributed as they should have to educational access, equality, equity, efficiency and quality in poverty-stricken areas. I suggest that poverty- alleviation-oriented curriculum and instruction requirements in Hope Primary Schools are theoretically misleading and realistically problematic. With the growth of political liberalization in the central government and sustained economic growth in China, the signs of competition for financing rural basic education have already appeared; rural basic education will experience a new stage of expansion. The theoretical basis of my analysis is the philosophy of basic education for literacy and socialization of children and the World Bank's guidelines for education: highest priority for investment in basic education for educational access, equality, equity and efficiency in developing countries. The main methods applied here are historical

analysis based on documentary records and macro-economic analysis based on the criteria for educational access, equity and quality.

Origins and Development

On October 30, 1989, only months after the Tiananmen Tragedy, the CYDF, a sub-organization of Communist Youth League (CYL), declared that Project Hope was set up to help school age children in poverty-stricken areas to enroll in school. The league, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), is regarded as a supporting hand to CPC in conducting national youth activities according to its political guidelines. The league set up CYDF in March 1989 allegedly for the purpose of promoting activities related to youth development. Winning endorsement and support from state leaders and the central government and becoming nationally visible since its inception, Project Hope added the topic of poorly supported rural basic education to the list of issues that government officials hoped would distract the public from focusing on the aftermath of the Tianamen Tragedy. However, it is very difficult to trace the exact political origins of Project Hope from available documents and verify the hypothesis that it was a politically motivated project undertaken at this critical time.

Soon after its founding in 1989, Project Hope sponsored 11 children who could not go to school because of poverty in north China's Hebei Province. On May 15, 1990, the project sponsored the renovation of an old primary school in Jinzhai County, in east China's Anhui Province and renamed the school "Hope Primary School." Since then, the organized solicitation of donations and gifts for the project started to acquire momentum. A great number of old schools were renovated and new schools were built with the project's sponsorship. All these schools were uniformly named the Hope Primary School. Project Hope has received aggregate donated funds and gifts of 1.257 billion RMB (about 151.5 million US dollars) and has sponsored 1.8 million school age children from poor rural families to enroll in schools. The project has sponsored the construction and renovation of 5,256 primary schools (Guangmin Daily 1997). Thus, Project Hope has set up a special school system, the Hope Primary School system.

Interestingly, the Hope School system, just like the reemerged private school system in China, to a certain extent is not within the dominant state public school system in terms of school financing. Private education has reappeared since the middle 1980s (Deng 1997; Kwong, 1997; Mok, 1997), with school numbers and enrollments reaching 0.4 percent of the total number of schools and student population in China in 1997 (Wang 1997). Private schools are under the supervision of the Superintendent Office; therefore, they are under the control of state educational authorities in terms of macro administration and political monitoring (Deng 1997). Organizationally and administratively, only the Hope Primary School system is to any great extent outside the hierarchy of the State Education Commission, renamed the Ministry of Education after 1998; and more often than not, it operates independently of the educational authorities.

The Chinese educational system was centralized and politicized to great extent in terms of administration and financing until the middle 1980s, when a series of educational changes and reforms took place in line with the state economic reform and modernization strategies. The success of vanguard agricultural and economic reforms in the late 1970s and early 1980s provided physical resources for new educational expansion (Riskin, 1993). In 1985, the CPC Central Committee enacted the "Decision of the CPC Central Committee on the Reform of China's Education Structure." In the following year, the National People's Congress turned it into the Education Act, the first education law since 1949 when the new China was founded. The most important features of this fundamental reform are legalization of 9-year compulsory universal education; the decentralization of educational administration; the diversification of the educational financing system; and the vocationalization of secondary education (Lewin, Little, Xu and Zheng, 1994; Zhu and Lan, 1996). For primary education, according to Tsang (1996), the most important change was that the central government would get rid of almost all its financing responsibilities in order to encourage lower level governments and communities to tap their great potential to finance education. The local governments, plus the provincial government that provided a minor share of funds, became almost totally responsible for the financing of primary and secondary education. According to the data of the State Education Commission, provincial and local governments accounted for 99.98 percent of budgeted expenditure in 1991 and 99.97 percent in 1992 for primary education. The national-level investment in basic education remained inadequate after the reform, much below the average level of developing countries (Tsang, 1994, 1996).

The local resources for education in "poverty-stricken areas" (state- or province-categorized "poor counties") were notably inadequate. In 1995, there were 592 counties categorized as "poor" with 85 million of people, whose average annual income was less than 268 RMB (about 32 US dollars per capita). Of these poor counties, there were 195 "extremely poor" counties with 58 million people whose average annual income was less than 200 RMB (about 24 US dollars per capita) (Huang, 1995). The average annual income per capita in these poor counties was far below the UN poverty indicators that regard PPP (purchasing power parity) below $60 per month per capita as poverty and $30 as extreme poverty (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 1994). In these poor counties, people lacked subsistence levels of food and clothing. Naturally, it was very expensive for poverty-stricken households and local governments to provide basic education to school age children in these counties. Also, the teaching force in these counties continued to be inadequate in both quantity and quality. Even though there was free tuition in all public schools, school age children could not go to school or they dropped out of school because their parents were not able to pay general fees and because they were needed as farm or household helpers. In addition, the school buildings and facilities were in very poor condition. In some extremely poor mountainous counties, teachers taught students in unsafe and

undesirable places such as dilapidated temples or caves, according to many reports (Cheng, 1992; Huang, 1994; Zhang and Ma, 1996). Striving to obtain enough food and clothing for local people to subsist, the political authorities and school communities in these poor counties were not able to invest adequately in education. They were very eager to accept any financial contributions from outside to help expand education.

The trends of educational decentralization and finance diversification in reform and long standing poverty in the underdeveloped areas in particular, provided Project Hope the sociopolitical atmosphere to come into being and grow quickly. The initiators of the project took on the gritty issue of the long-awaited rural education expansion by making the best use of the opportunities for change and reform to promote basic education investment in poor areas. When local governments were not able to take care of the basic education in all poor counties, Project Hope's participation in and contribution to primary education expansion grew significantly.

Empowerment by the Central Authorities

Almost all the leading officials at state and provincial levels gave Project Hope unusually enthusiastic endorsement and support. The reasons behind this were multiple. They could be due to the real sympathy the leading politicians felt for poor children and their sincere willingness to support basic education expansion in rural areas. They could be due to the close personal connections between the CYDF organizers and the leading politicians, or due to the political needs for the authorities to avert public attention from the tight governmental budget for basic education after reform, or possibly to divert attention from the newly strangled student movements. Leading officials in China have a long tradition of writing calligraphy to express their reflection, admiration and other personal attitudes. Although he vowed to stop writing anything for others to show his personal endorsement in the 1990s, the late leader Deng Xiaoping wrote the title of Project Hope for CYDF to show his endorsement of the program on September 5, 1990 He then donated 5,000 RMB (about 600 US dollars) on two occasions in the name of "an old CPC member." He encouraged his family members to make donations. The late President Li Xiannian wrote the title for the first Hope Primary School that was built in Anhui Province. The Party Secretary General and President Jiang Zeming and then Premier Li Peng followed suit. Almost all the important politicians and celebrities emulated Deng by showing support and making personal donations to the project in one way and another (Huang, 1994; Legal Daily, 1997). Consequently, all governmental departments at different levels related to rural education gave the green light to the implementation and development of a variety of programs of this non- governmental project. More often than not, the programs of Project Hope were even given the highest priority on government agenda in some poor counties and prefectures.

Domestic and Overseas Solicitation

With endorsement and support from state and provincial leaders, the mass media joined the publicity campaign for the project. The mass media broadcast a great number of touching stories about how poor kids longed for schooling and about how poor citizens as well as high profile officials and celebrities helped dropouts go to school. Books, television features and films related to the project were produced, publicized and won the popular acceptance of the public. In April 1992, one program named "A Million of Love Hearts" for children in poor areas was launched to seek donations from urban areas across the country. In January 1994, another program named "Project Hope: One Home for One Dropout" covered the whole country. The purpose of this program was to encourage one well-off family in both rural and urban areas across the country to help sponsor the schooling of one poor child. In May 1997, a program entitled "Project Hope: The Last Large-scale Domestic Donation Solicitation" was waged nationwide. Through these programs and many others, Project Hope was well known in urban areas as well as in rural areas. It was estimated that every government employee made donations to the project at least once. According to a random survey done by the State Science and Technology Evaluation Center, 98 percent of the respondents in Beijing knew the project. 80.8 percent knew the project through television, newspapers and other media. Eighty-two percent of the respondents made donations to people in poor areas or areas hit by natural disasters; 73.1% made donations to Project Hope (Beijing Youth Daily, 1997). In recent years, corporations, and specifically foreign enterprises like the multinationals Motorola, Coca-Cola and Phillips in particular, were attracted by the publicity for Project Hope. Corporate donations and gifts accounted for the major portion of the funds in recent years.

Well-organized publicity work also targeted potential donors overseas, especially entrepreneurs in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao. A great number of individuals from Japan, the US and other countries made donations and sponsored poor students. In 1996, Project Hope created its homepage on the Internet and made its programs more accessible to international communities. The CYDF held an international conference entitled "Project Hope and Fund Raising in China." In addition, three students who were sponsored by the project were selected to participate in the passing of the Olympic Torch in the US that year.

During 1980-1988, the total number of school age children who are not in school in China was estimated to have reached 37 million due to various socioeconomic reasons. In the early 1990s, the number decreased due to the government's growing will and more serious work in implementing the 9-year compulsory education policy. But it was still estimated that over one million students dropped out each year. Most of the dropouts were in the poverty- stricken areas (Yue, 1991).

Project Hope's outstanding efforts and activities against the bleak rural education background have been warmly accepted by people in all walks of life in the country. It has sponsored the return to

school of nearly 2 million dropouts and constructed over 5,000 primary schools. Currently, its organizers seek to raise the aggregated number of sponsored students to 3 million, and the number of constructed and renovated schools to 6000 by the year 2000. In addition, and more ambitiously, Project Hope has attempted to train primary school teachers and tried to use the Hope Primary Schools to directly reduce poverty in families and communities. It is widely believed that Project Hope has made a great contribution to the development of rural basic education in poor areas. It is even regarded as the only hope for developing basic education and reducing poverty by some policy-makers as well as by the public in some poverty-stricken areas.

Politicization and Bureaucratization

Not only did the state and provincial leaders support the project directly and make personal donations, but they also made use of the project for various political purposes. The donations and gifts from high officials were always in the headlines of national and local media, which publicized them caring about poor children and their schooling. In addition, the central political authorities used the project as an important means of implementing top- down "ideological education." Through supporting this campaign, it was expected that the CPC members, government officials and staff as well as the ordinary citizens would be taught to continue the popular traditions of the party and avoid corruption and other social ills exacerbated by the introduction of a free market economy. According to the People's Daily (1995) and Guangmin Daily (1997)-- mouthpieces of the central party authorities and the central government--Project Hope has become one of the most effective and most influential "ideological education" programs in recent years.

On March 10, 1994, former Premier Li Peng made his "Government Work Report" to the National People's Congress. He specifically emphasized Project Hope by urging people to "mobilize the social forces to continue the implementation of Project Hope." For three consecutive years since 1994, the "White Paper of China Human Rights Development" detailed the yearly statistics of the project's achievements in school enrollment and school building as important indicators of human rights improvement in China (Xinhua News Agency, 1997).

Behind the fanfare of this highly politicized educational scene were the bare facts of rural basic education. First, though there have been significant increases in financial and physical resources invested in education since the 1980s, national investment in education remains relatively low compared to other countries. In 1992, the per-student budgeted expenditures for primary education in China, as a ratio of per capita GNP, was only 6.8 percent, substantially lower than the average of 10-11 percent for countries in Asia (Tsang, 1996). By contrast, public spending per student in the higher education sector as a percentage of GNP per capital was 193 percent in 1990 and 175 percent in 1994, much higher than the 1990 average of 98 percent in

East Asian countries (World Bank, 1997). Second, "minban" teachers (literally "people-managed" teachers, or community-supported teachers), most of whom teach in poor school communities in rural areas, have been decreasing by tens of thousands each year due to the governmental policies aimed at eliminating them and due to the differential pay they receive. The shortage of rural teachers has become more serious. In 1998, minban teachers decreased to about 2.3 million, accounting about 40 percent of the total teacher population in rural areas. They do not enjoy "equal pay for equal work," the golden rule that China has always pledged to obey both in Mao's egalitarian era before reform or in free market era since the late 1970s. Most of these teachers are actually living under the poverty line; some even join the ranks of the extremely poor because the poor and extremely poor communities are not able to pay their salaries and benefits for months or even years (Paine, 1991; Cheng, 1992; Zhang, 1994; Wang, 1997).

Third, the education surcharges and taxes legalized by central and local governments, which aim at development of basic education and at compensating minban teachers' salaries in particular, are difficult to collect, or are misused by being invested in township enterprises when they are collected. Both minban and public basic teachers, in particular minban teachers, working in poor communities more often than not are paid IOUs for their work, and the school facilities remain in poor conditions or worsen (Cheng, 1992; Wang, 1996; Zhang and Ma, 1996). All of these undesirable situations related to rural schools and teachers could have been much improved if the state and provincial authorities had shown equally their enthusiasm and endorsement for Project Hope for the basic education expansion in poor counties.

Bureaucratization of the project and the Hope Primary School system is closely linked to politicization of the project. In addition to its own leaders and operational departments, CYDF has invited a number of politicians, officials and celebrities to be honorary leaders. CYDF's honorary president is the former top legislator Wan Li, the former Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Its president Li Keqiang is a member of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress. A number of retired political elites such as generals and the former leading members of the secretariat of the State Council and even some current officials of the Ministry of Education and the representatives of the upper-house-like People's Political Consultative Conference were invited to hold the titles of supervisors for the implementation of Project Hope programs. It was arranged that they would occasionally visit prefectures and counties to supervise and examine the implementation Project Hope programs and report to the public and external decision-making bodies on behalf of the CYDF and Project Hope.

Just like a centralized governmental organization, CYDF and Project Hope have developed their top-down national networks from Beijing-based headquarters down to county-level branches in almost all provinces and autonomous regions. These parallel the hierarchy of the public educational system under the Ministry of Education.

Seemingly, they are non-governmental, non-profit social welfare promotion organizations. As a matter of fact, they have been shaped into another pseudo governmental organization with its personnel actually on the governments' payroll. In most extremely poor counties, the local economy is simply subsistence level agriculture; the local budget sometimes can not cover the payrolls of the over-staffed governmental departments. Furthermore, it is difficult and time-consuming for the external financial aid for education to reach these remote poor counties. The CYDF and Project Hope branches in these counties most often have nearly nothing to contribute and merely add to the burden of local fragile financial, administrative and educational systems. In some counties, when a limited amount of sponsorship for a program is available, various kinds of corruption (such as misuse of funds, cheating, and falsification of records) beleaguer the program. Becoming fully aware of these organizational and management problems, the headquarters attempted to adjust and downsize their organizations and improve management and efficiency by eliminating those ineffective and problematic prefecture- or county-level branches. Such a goal, as the leaders of CYDF admit, is difficult to achieve (CYDF 1996).

For Equality, Equity, Efficiency and Quality?

A great deal of attention has been focused on the issues of equality, equity, efficiency and quality in education investment by educational researchers, policy decision makers in governments and the international institutions represented by the World Bank (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 1994; World Bank, 1995). Originally, the goal of Project Hope was to increase educational equality, equity and quality by sponsoring the education of school age children of poor families and by improving school facilities. The school age children who can not go to school and those who drop out of school because of poverty reach one million across the country per year as mentioned above, and such children account for from 20 percent to over 50 percent of school age children in different poor counties (Tsang, 1996). Therefore, the students that Project Hope can help account for only a very small percentage of the total population of these children. The question arises: Among them who should receive the limited sponsorship? The obvious answer should be those who are from the poorest families based on basic economic principles, so that sponsorship can be used with the greatest marginal utility and effect. In fact, however, the financial aid more often than not goes to students related to the power groups such as administrative authorities, government employees, the school principal and teachers as well as the students from relatively rich families.

Where should Hope Primary Schools be located; who should be enrolled?

There are two kinds of standard that CYDF set for Hope Primary School construction. If the donated funds reach 200,000 RMB

(about 24,100 US dollars), a new school should be constructed with the funds. If 100,000 RMB (or 12,200 US dollars) are available, an old dilapidated school should be renovated with the funds. According to the requirements of CYDF, the location for a new school should be in the township center. In reality, a great number of newly built Hope Primary Schools are built in county centers, cities and towns. It is mandatory that the location for renovated schools be at least on a village center school if a location is not available where, for instance, a group of households are clustered and share a small simple school. Most renovated and reconstructed Hope Primary Schools, however, are former township center schools. Obviously, the county centers, the township centers, and even the village centers, are relatively economically developed and have higher average household income than surrounding areas in the county. This is especially the case in extremely poor and remote mountainous counties. Generally, in these central areas, there are comparatively fewer school age children who can not go to school or drop out because of poverty. Thus, the building of new schools and school renovation contribute less to educational access, equity and equality for poorer children in the county than they should.

My visit in 1996 to a beautiful Hope Primary School located in a town center in Anhui Province revealed substantial inequality and inequity in the student enrollment of the Hope Primary School. The school I visited was the only Hope Primary School under the jurisdiction of a township level, the lowest level government in a county categorized as being of "extreme poverty." From random sampling and interviewing thirty K-1 and K-2 students, and their parents and interviewing the principal and teachers, I found that all students' families had adequate food and clothes. This meant that the families were not "poor" according to local governmental poverty criteria--as discussed above--despite the fact that in this mountainous county the average annual income per capita is less than 200 RMB (about 24 US dollars). All interviewed families reported that they could regularly give their children pocket money during the academic semester. They all responded that they were able to support the general fees if their children were otherwise sent to an ordinary public school in the town, which was tuition free but charged general fees. Second, 51 percent of the total enrollment lived in the prosperous township center with booming business. Forty-one percent lived in the three neighboring villages that were about half an hour to one hour for students to walk to school; a few students in senior grades from rich families rode bikes to school. This group of students all had family members working in the town, most in township factories. Only 8 percent of students came from the outer six villages, which were home to 59 percent of the population under the township jurisdiction. Almost all this 8 percent of students had one family member working in the township either as a factory worker or self-employed businessman, so that the students had places for boarding and lodging. The principal and 5 teachers interviewed stated that it was impossible for the school to enroll children whose family members were peasants in the outer poorer villages in deep mountains, which were anywhere

from a one-hour to a five-hour walk from the township center. They admitted that it was financially impossible for the school to support students' lunches, not to mention board, lodging or transportation to some villages.

The typical rhetoric concerning the Hope Primary School's location in the highroad-accessible town or county centers is that more of the general public will see the exemplary buildings and teaching activities of the school. More importantly, the higher-level authorities who sometimes make investigations of grassroots units can easily witness the physical outcome of Project Hope. Thus, hopefully, they will provide greater attention and support to basic education in the county. If schools were built in remote mountainous villages where the cars and busses can not reach, the authorities would not see the evidence of educational development in the area. One concludes that in locating a school site, building and renovating a school, the local policy makers orient to the response of higher level authorities and relatively rich students and their families rather than to the educational needs and expectations of economically disadvantaged children and their families who live in geographically disadvantaged places (Tou et al., 1995).

After a school site is located, on what scale should a Hope Primary School be built or renovated?

Though the distribution of the donated funds for school building or renovation is fixed to standard amounts, the local governments can supplement extra funds when available if they think necessary. Due to the huge regional differences and economic variation across the country, it is impossible for CYDF to strictly apply uniform standards. The local politics use the opportunity of school building and expansion to exercise their powers and seek local funds to invest in education based on local economic conditions. Nevertheless, some, if not most, local authorities unrealistically aim at building the best, the biggest and the most beautiful school building in the region. In many cases because of careless planning and mismanagement, the building of the main school infrastructure expends all the funds before a school can be completed. Then, no more money is available for purchasing accessory parts and items to complete the school. For instance, the government of the rural Xinguo County in east China's Jiangxi Province made the ambitious decision to build the best primary school building in the Ganzhou Prefecture. The county government even sent professionals to the city where the prefecture headquarters was located to investigate what the most modern and beautiful primary school building should be like before they started construction. The county used 200,000 RMB (about $24,100 US) externally donated funds and gifts, plus over 100,000 RMB locally collected funds to build a Hope Primary School. After the main building was finished, the builders found no money was left for completing washrooms, laboratories or to order blackboards, desks and chairs, not to mention equipment and books for the school laboratories and library. It was impossible to collect more

non-governmental funds in this poor county. The county and lower level governmental branches were unable to provide extra financial assistance. This Hope Primary School was left as nothing but an unfinished modern building (Tou et al., 1995). It then took many years for the county to complete the school and make it useable. Unfortunately, a great number of Hope Primary School buildings were built or half built in the same way.

Because of the complicated dual leadership in administration and management, most Hope Primary Schools can not fully improve their potential for internal and external efficiency. As required by the CYDF, a Hope Primary School should upon completion be immediately put under the leadership and administration of the local Educational Bureau or Office at the county or town level, which is the grassroots level in the hierarchy of the Ministry of Education. However, the school is built with the funds obtained by and under instruction of the local CYDF and Project Hope Office. And they are affiliated with the local branch of the CYL, which also functions as a governmental branch. Thus, the Hope Primary School is subject to two administrators. Since the League branch solicits and accepts the donations and gifts, and is responsible for building the school, it always has greater decision-making power in administration and management. The local educational authorities are often put aside in the decision making process about Hope Schools. But local educational authorities will not easily retire from the competition for power and influence, particularly on the high-profile Hope Primary School.

In addition, who should be the principal, who should be teachers in the new school, what kind of poor children should be enrolled, and what special management policies should be practiced in the school? All these equality, equity and efficiency-related questions receive conflicting answers from the two different administrative authorities with different motivations and orientations. Hence, constant conflict and tensions ensue between the two power systems.

When the two administrators can not reach a compromise, as is usually the case, the Hope Primary School becomes the victim of their conflicts, competition and antagonism. Teaching quality and student achievement are thus negatively affected.

Curriculum and Instruction: For Poverty Reduction?

China has long worked under a national uniform core curriculum in primary education. Alternations of core curricula are under the absolute control of the Ministry of Education. Naturally, Hope Primary Schools are expected to follow the standard practice of all public primary schools about what core curricula should be taught. The curricula and instruction do not include vocational and technical education at the level of primary schools, but only at the level of junior and senior secondary schools and beyond. This is in line with World Bank educational policy recommendations: "Basic education encompasses general skills such as language, science and mathematics, and communication skills that provide the foundation for further

education and training. It also includes the development of attitudes necessary for the work place. Academic and vocational skills are imparted at higher levels, on-the-job training and work-related continuing education update those skills." (World Bank, 1995).

In early 1994, Vice Premier Li Nanqing, who took charge of national education policy, suggested that the Hope Primary School should be different from other general public primary schools in curriculum and instruction. The Hope Primary Schools should educate elementary graduates in the agricultural and technical knowledge needed and develop the skills to help families and communities in the drive to alleviate poverty. Obviously, such educational goals for children ages 7 to 13 years in primary schools were unrealistic given the inadequacy of the schools and the communities. What is more, these goals are inconsistent with the commonly held philosophy of universal primary education (Wang, 1995). In the education reform of 1985, the educational authorities proposed vocationalization at secondary school level and beyond. Almost half of the secondary schools in the country have been gradually turned into vocational and technical secondary schools since then (Lewin et al., 1994). This policy orientation and implementation were regarded as realistic, viable and effective because they were based on the economic development strategies of China, on the advice of educational professionals, and on the related experiences of other countries. The vice-premier's radical educational policy proposal for Hope Primary Schools did not win warm support from educators, especially professors and researchers under then State Education Commission. But the CYL and CYDF followed this proposal and demanded that the Hope Primary Schools should define their own character by educating students with agricultural, scientific and technological skills as well as cultural knowledge. Since then, it has been required that the Hope Primary School should take the path of "combining agricultural and technical knowledge and skills with cultural contents" by adding farming and technical education to the core curriculum. In addition, more radical policy guidelines were adopted to encourage Hope Primary Schools to develop school economies, such as the school-affiliated business operations, and furthermore, to develop schools as technical extension stations in poor rural areas. Later, CYDF explicitly required Hope Primary Schools to become agricultural and technical extension stations or centers in local communities (CYDF 1996b).

According to case studies by Peking University graduates, three direct obstacles lay in the way of this "new path" (Tou et al., 1995).

- First, there were no places such as experimental fields or laboratories to implement agricultural and technical education. When not even desks and chairs were available or adequate for students, it was difficult or nearly impossible for the school to obtain extra facilities such as land plots or laboratory equipment to teach plant cultivation techniques or electrical skills, for example.

- Second, teachers were notably inadequate in both quantity and quality in poor counties. When the supply of teachers in vocational and technical schools at secondary level were inadequate, it was to be expected that they would also be inadequate for the agricultural and technical curricula of the Hope Primary Schools. This was partly because vocational and technical teacher qualifications were not yet required in Hope Primary Schools, and most probably would not be considered by planners of teacher education. The Hope Primary Schools occasionally had to invite experienced farmers and technicians or secondary vocational school teachers to classrooms, as mere gestures toward implementing vocational and technical curricula and instruction.
- Third, the elementary students were obviously too young and cognitively unprepared to accept vocational and technical training; and the acquired knowledge and skills would most probably become obsolete years later when they graduated and entered the labor force.
- Fourth, parents opposed the non-cultural content of curricula and instruction. If children had to spend a significant amount of time in agricultural work in school, peasants would prefer that they be household helping hands or learn farming skills on the farm instead. And even some local administrative and educational leaders believed that it was not realistic for primary school students to be directly involved in programs of poverty alleviation and economic development for families and communities.

According to Chinese educational professionals, some light agricultural work is necessary. Children should be educated to have solid ethics and a good attitude toward productive and vocational work through such experiences. But the Hope Primary School has little alternative to being a general primary school rather than a vocationally or technically oriented school carrying heavy political and economic expectations (Sha, Zhou, Fang and Xu, 1995). As the World Bank (1995) pointed out: "Education alone will not reduce poverty; complementary macroeconomic policies and physical investments are also needed." When actual investments in the poverty stricken counties were rare and problematic, the great hopes and expectations placed on the children of Hope Primary Schools to contribute to the reduction of poverty and to economic development are only daydreams, even if the students are otherwise adequately equipped with vocational and technical knowledge and skills.

Conclusion

Encouraged by its political endorsements, its great achievements and popularity, Project Hope has become more and more ambitious in its educational endeavors. The leaders of CYDF and Project Hope expect the Hope Primary School to be not only the hope for children of poor families, but also the hope for parents and local communities to rid themselves of poverty and become well off. Unless

poor children are lucky enough to live in the more advantaged villages or unless they are related to locally powerful people, the children's chances of truly escaping poverty through schooling are small. The expectations placed on the Hope Primary School have become a burden for the young children and teachers; these expectations are unrealistic and problematic.

The leaders of Project Hope now plan to set up at least one Hope Primary School in each of the over 500 poor counties in China. Presently, because the donations and gifts are not adequate, Hope Primary Schools currently exist in only about 100 poor counties. But, the leaders now have new plans in addition to continuing to sponsor children and building schools in every poor county. In addition to transforming Hope Primary Schools into agricultural and technical stations and training students with poverty-reduction skills as mentioned above, the new goals and plans include the following:

- First, to seek donations and gifts to set up the Hope Library in every Hope Primary School. If one donates 3,000 RMB (approximately US$ 362), 500 books for children will be purchased and a small library in a Hope Primary School will be set up.
- Second, to build up Training Bases for Hope Primary School Teachers. The first National Training Center for Hope Primary School Teachers, at least the physical building, has been completed in Zhejiang Province.
- Third, to establish the Project Hope Award for Outstanding Teachers. Dozens of dedicated and experienced teachers from extremely poor school communities have been selected for the awards. They were invited to Beijing to accept the honors.
- Fourth, to organize the selection of a number of outstanding students from Hope Primary Schools as Hope Stars (CYDF 1997a, 1997b).

At present, more and more people and institutions unrelated to the system of the CYL and CYDF use, consciously or unconsciously, the title of "Project Hope" for financing basic education, or for non-educational or profit making purposes. They thus challenge the political and educational authority of CYDF and Project Hope for rural basic education expansion. To safeguard its best and exclusive interests, CYDF registered its service trademark of Project Hope with the China Trademark Bureau in April 1997. This places in legal jeopardy any individual or any institution using the title "Project Hope" in China without approval from CYDF and Project Hope. It is estimated that over 400 Hope Primary Schools in China have recently been built with the funds from sources outside CYDF and Project Hope. Apparently, all these schools will have to either change names or join the Hope Primary School system under CYDF in the near future.

In November 1997, the Sate Education Commission and the Ministry of Finance set up the "State Compulsory Education Scholarship For Children in Poor Areas" by earmarking 130 million

RMB (about 15.7 million US dollars) to support poor children in the state-categorized "poor" and "extremely poor" counties. It is expected that every year over 600,000 students will receive the scholarship (CYDF 1997). Though started much later and on a smaller scale compared with Project Hope's programs, this was the biggest effort ever made by the State Education Commission after educational reform in the middle 1980s to directly sponsor the schooling of children of poor families in poor areas.

When CYDF and Project Hope play bigger roles and the Hope Primary School system attempts to exercise greater influence in basic education and community development in poor areas, the Ministry of Education will become more active in rural basic education expansion. The ministry along with other powerful ministries will probably make greater financial contributions and work out more carefully-designed policy guidelines for all primary schools including Hope Primary Schools in rural areas. This will improve educational access and quality for school-age children of poor families. Along with the state's poverty- alleviation and economic development programs, it is expected that educational equity and efficiency as well as the governmental goal of universalization of 9-year basic education will be gradually realized in the future.

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Block Scheduling Effects on a State Mandated Test of Basic Skills

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of a tri-schedule on the academic achievement of students in a high school. The tri-schedule consists of traditional, 4x4 block, and hybrid schedules running at the same time in the same high school. Effectiveness of the schedules was determined from the state mandated test of basic skills in reading, language, and mathematics. Students who were in a particular schedule their freshman year were tested at the beginning of their sophomore year. A statistical ANCOVA test was performed using the schedule types

as independent variables and cognitive skill index and GPA as covariates. For reading and language, there was no statistically significant difference in test results. There was a statistical difference mathematics-computation. Block mathematics is an ideal format for obtaining more credits in mathematics, but the block format does little for mathematics achievement and conceptual understanding. The results have content specific implications for schools, administrations, and school boards who are considering block scheduling adoption.

The past decade has provided schools with many opportunities to reform education at a local level. One reform movement that has gained in popularity in the past few years is block scheduling. More than fifty percent of secondary schools in the United States have opted to change their schools' schedule to one that involves longer classes (Canady & Rettig, 1995). Proponents of school reform often view block scheduling as a way to extend the traditional periods of uninterrupted class time and improve student achievement (Bevevino, Snodgrass, Adams, & Dengel, 1998; Canady & Rettig, 1995; Cobb, Abate, & Baker, 1999; Queen & Isenhour, 1998; Canady & Rettig, 1996). As the trend continues to grow throughout the United States, teachers, parents, administrators, and university professors are seeking evidence for the impact of block scheduling on student achievement. As reformers have sought better ways to increase student achievement in the high schools, the question of time used for instruction has become a major focus.

Literature Review

There have been many debates at the district and school levels about the perceived benefits of block scheduling. The results of studies have supported and denounced the implementation of block scheduling. Previous studies have reported favorable teacher attitudes and perceptions about block scheduling though the use of surveys (Pullen, Morse, & Varrella, 1998; Sessoms, 1995; Tanner, 1996). Other studies have reported on the relationship between block scheduling and student grade point averages (Buckman, King & Ryan, 1995; Edwards 1993; Holmberg, 1996; Schoenstein, 1995). These studies focused mainly on trends in grade point averages over time of implementation. Mixed results have been reported on state standardized test scores (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1996) and standardized test scores (Bateson, 1990; Hess, Wronkovich & Robinson, 1998; Lockwood, 1995; Wild, 1998). Most of these studies support the longer traditional schedule over the 4 x 4 block in science for example, yet support the 4 x 4 block schedule in math and social studies. Graduation rates have also been reported to benefit from the 4 x 4 schedule (Carroll, 1995; Monroe, 1989; Sessoms, 1995). The findings of these studies have been inconsistent, sometimes reporting gains for students on block scheduling, sometimes reporting no differences, and

sometimes reporting losses compared with students on traditional scheduling. Several large-sample studies, for example, have reported results in multiple subject areas. Hess, Wronkovich, and Robinson (1998) and Wronkovich, Hess, and Robinson (1997) used "retired" copies of SAT II Achievement Tests. Using the Otis-Lennon Scholastic Aptitude Test as a covariate, they conducted regression analyses on pre- and post-tests. The study concluded that there were no significant differences in student achievement between 4x4 semester and traditional schedule types in geometry and history, and a significant difference in biology and English with 4x4 semester schedule students achieving higher scores than the traditional schedule.

In a second study done by The College Board (1998), tests were examined for student achievement differences in four subject areas: Calculus, biology, US history, and English literature. An analysis of covariance using the PSAT/NMSQT as a covariate was performed on Advanced Placement examination scores. Students who were taught AP English literature under an extended traditional class time (meeting everyday for more than 60 minutes) scored significantly higher than students in a traditional schedule, and both fall and spring 4x4 schedules. Students who took the AP US history exam in both the traditional and extended traditional format outperformed those in the 4x4 block schedules. Students enrolled in an extended traditional AP biology and calculus class outperformed those students in a traditional format and the 4x4 block schedules. However, these results might be expected if more time was spent on a daily basis learning any subject. Moreover, the results reported the effects of the traditional, extended traditional, and the 4x4 schedules, but did not include other types of block scheduling (e.g., block 8, alternating block, trimester, or hybrid).

Cobb, Abate, and Baker (1999) used a post-test only, matched pairs design to evaluate standardized achievement in mathematics, reading, and writing. The researchers found that block students performed significantly less well on the mathematics standardized test. There were no differences in achievement on the standardized reading and writing test scores. The literature is consistent on the inconsistency of achievement of students within the block schedule.

Most studies have examined students after they have switched to a new schedule. Few studies have directly compared student achievement within the same school utilizing different schedules. The purpose of this paper is to add to the literature base a study which investigated student achievement on standardized tests of reading, language, and mathematics. The tests results were evaluated based upon the three schedule types within the same school. Systematic examinations of the effects of block scheduling are needed if research is to adequately inform reform movements and decisions.

Methods

Context

In the spring of 1994, discussions were held on changing the traditional day schedule at South Springfield High School (SSHS). The

change to a 4x4 alternative schedule was proposed after five years of study and consideration. However, a compromise tri-schedule was implemented rather than a 4x4-block schedule. The tri-schedule included three schedules types (traditional, 4x4-block, and hybrid) running at the same time during the school day. The traditional schedule consisted of six 55-minute classes that were taught for the entire school year. The 4x4-block schedule consisted of four 87-minute classes that were taught in one semester. The hybrid schedule consisted of three traditional and two block classes taught each day.

South Springfield High School is a large, four-year school located in a medium-sized college town in the Midwest. The student population of 1800 is mostly white and includes children from the city and rural areas of the county. In the fall of 1997, SSHS began the scheduling format described earlier. Under this format, both traditional and block courses were offered in all subject areas except the performing arts and advanced placement classes. The total contact time in block courses was approximately 37 hours less than for yearlong traditional courses (Table 1). This equated to 40 fewer class meetings for block classes than traditional classes.

Table 1
Descriptive Information for Classes under Block and Traditional Formats

Schedule Descriptors	Traditional	Hybrid	4X4 Block
Class Time (mins./day)	55	55 and 87	87
Number of Days of Instruction	180	180 and 90	90
Class Time (mins./school year)	9900	9900 and 7830	7830
Classes/Day	6	5	4
Classes/Year	6	7	8
Hours/Day	6.5	6.5	6.5
Credits	12	14	16
Teacher Utilization Rate[a,b]	83%	83%[b]	75%

a. Defined as the total teaching contact hours divided by the total class time during a day.
b. Teacher utilization rate was the same for all teachers due to contract and union regulations.

Students

During their freshman year, the students were randomly assigned to a block or traditional schedule. Due to scheduling concerns with special education students and Advanced Placement classes,

students were then asked to switch into different classes than originally assigned. This resulted in the formation of the hybrid schedule to accommodate the course requests. Learning from the first year's scheduling dilemma, scheduling for the second year was student driven. Students submitted requests to take certain classes in either the block or traditional format. Based upon frequency counts, certain classes were only offered in one particular format one time and in the other format multiple times. Due to the proportionately distributed classes, student choice was ultimately limited to certain class formats.

State Mandated Test of Basic Skills

The Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP+) is a state mandated test of basic skills that all students in Grades 3, 6, 8, and 10 had to take. All 10th graders (sophomores) are required to take all three sections of the ISTEP+ test, regardless of previous year state of residence or school. The results included only those students who took all three sections of the test (N = 327). Due to absences, some students did not take certain portions of the test.

The areas tested include reading, language, and mathematics. The sub-areas of reading are comprehension and vocabulary. The sub-areas of language are mechanics and expression. The sub-areas of mathematics are concepts and applications, and computation. In addition to these sub-areas, each area has a total score and a battery score for the entire test. For the purposes of this study, only scores on the sub-areas are reported since the total areas are composed of the two individual sub-areas, and the battery is a composite of all six sub-areas. Norm Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores and the Cognitive Skills Index (CSI) were used from the result printout for analysis. The NCE and CSI scores were norm-referenced. The NCE scores (1-99) were based upon an equal-interval scale. Using NCE scores allowed us to compare scores among schedule groups. The CSI describes an individual's overall performance on the ISTEP+ aptitude test. It compares the student's cognitive ability with that of students who are the same age. The CSI is a normalized standard score with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 16. The test was administered over a four day period for three hours per day. Each section of the test was timed. Table 2 shows the descriptive information about the students who took the ISTEP+ test.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Students Taking ISTEP+

Schedule Type	N	1997-98 Freshman GPA	CSI
Traditional	117	2.73	113.06
Block	141	3.01	113.08
Hybrid	75	3.25	116.99

Analysis

ANCOVA statistical tests were run on the SPSS computer statistical software package. Because it was impossible to obtain a randomized or matched sample in this present study, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was utilized for the design. The ANCOVA for each dependent variable was a one factor fixed effect (schedule type: traditional, block, hybrid) with CSI (cognitive skills index) and cumulative GPA as simultaneous multiple covariates.

Results

Reading

Both of the sub-areas for reading were analyzed and determined to be non-significant by schedule type, and thus their results are not reported. Using reading-total as an example, CSI and GPA provided significant regression effects ($F[1,331] = 160.740$, $p < .001$; $F[1,331] = 6.308$, $p < .001$) respectively. No main effect for schedule type was found for reading-total ($F[2,331] = 1.470$, $p = .231$).

Language

Both of the sub-areas for language were also analyzed and determined to be non-significant by schedule type, and thus their results are not reported. Using language-total as an example, CSI and GPA provided significant regression effects ($F[1,331] = 140.809$, $p < .001$; $F[1,331] = 51.153$, $p < .001$) respectively. No main effect for schedule type was found for language-total ($F[2,331] = .679$, $p = .508$).

Mathematics

The ANCOVA results for mathematics-computation were significant. The covariates CSI and GPA provided significant regression effects for the dependent variable ($F[1,331] = 155.369$, $p < .001$ and $F[1,331] = 53.196$, $p < .001$) respectively (Table 3). A significant main effect for schedule type (Table 3) was found ($F[2,331] = 4.380$, $p = .013$). Table 4 shows the unadjusted mean scores for the mathematics-computation section of the ISTEP+ based upon schedule type. Traditional schedule students scored significantly higher on mathematics-computation than block and hybrid students (Table 5). The traditional and block students had a mean difference of 4.175 ($p = .006$) and the traditional and hybrid students had a mean difference of 4.181 ($p = .022$).

Table 3
ANCOVA for Dependent Variable
Mathematics-computation

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
CSI	22152.877	1	22152.877	155.369	.000
CUMGPA	7584.834	1	7584.834	53.196	.000
Schedule	1248.920	2	624.460	4.380	.013
Error	46624.507	327	142.583		

Table 4
Means[a] for Mathematics-computation by Schedule

Schedule	Mean	Std. Error
Traditional	69.115	1.128
Block	64.940	1.008
Hybrid	64.934	1.399

a Evaluated at covariates appeared in the model: CSI = 113.9819, CUMGPA = 2.9750.

Table 5
Pairwise Comparisons for Dependent Variable Mathematics-computation

(I) Schedule	(J) Schedule	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Traditional	Block	4.175	1.521	.006
Traditional	Hybrid	4.181	1.823	.022
Block	Hybrid	0.005	1.720	.997

For the dependent variable, mathematics-concepts and application, CSI and GPA provided a significant regression effect ($F[1,331] = 188.767$, $p < .001$ and $F[1,331] = 41.867$, $p < .001$), respectively. No main effect for schedule type was found ($F[2,331] = 1.456$, $p = .235$), thus tables are not provided due to the non-significant results. Even though three schedules existed at the high school and all students were enrolled in one of three schedules, students took mathematics in either a traditional or block format. The ANCOVA results from Table 5 would indicate that the traditional schedule is better for student achievement than the hybrid and block schedules. Mathematics was not taught in a hybrid format; only a block or traditional format. Thus a statistical ANCOVA test was performed on mathematics-computation separating the students based upon their

mathematics class format. The covariates CSI and GPA, provided significant regression effects ($F[1,332] = 164.238$, $p < .001$ and $F[1,332] = 43.876$, $p < .001$) respectively (Table 6). A significant main effect for mathematics class format was not found ($F[1,332] = 0.018$, $p = .892$).

Table 6
ANCOVA with Dependent Variable
Mathematics-computation
for All Sophomores

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
CSI	24069.004	1	24069.004	164.238	.000
CUMGPA	6429.975	1	6429.975	43.876	.000
Format	2.703	1	2.703	.018	.892
Error	48068.272	328	146.550		

Discussion

Reading and Language

There is no schedule that is significantly better than another for student achievement on ISTEP+ reading and language scores. After adjusting for differences in CSI and GPA, students scores on the reading and language portions of the ISTEP+ were comparable. In essence, the schedule type did not influence positively or negatively student scores. The findings of this study confirm the results found in previous studies. Cobb, Abate, and Baker (1999) and Holmberg (1996) reported that there were no differences in student achievement on reading and writing standardized test scores. In terms of the development of reading and language skills, as long as students are taking classes for the same amount of time each year, reading and language scores might be expected to remain the same. Perhaps all classes that a student might take under any schedule format, reinforce reading and language skills by incorporating some kind of reading and language component to their curriculum. Reading and language skills are most often found and needed in all types of curriculum and are thus reinforced across all classes.

Mathematics

The traditional schedule seems better for the understanding and retention of mathematical computation as determined from ISTEP+ scores for sophomores. Some studies have reported that block scheduling was desirable because it allowed for more credits and classes to be taken (Queen & Isenhour, 1998). What has not been examined is how a decrease in total time throughout the year due to a

schedule change might influences mathematics learning. Does taking a mathematics class everyday with a longer total percentage of time in class benefit a student over taking more mathematics classes with less time in each math class?

Table 6 shows the ANCOVA results for mathematics-computation based upon mathematics format of all students taking the ISTEP+. The non-significant results indicate that the mathematics format taken by students does not have an impact on their standardized mathematics test scores. Thus, schedule type was not a factor in the test scores for sophomores even though parts of the curriculum were left out of the block format classes due to time constraints (see Table 1). It is also interesting to note that the students were equalized using the two covariates. Initial glance of the unadjusted means might indicate that the traditional students actually did better. This was not the result. Another issue that has been discussed as an advantage of block scheduling is that students can take more classes, including more core classes such as mathematics, under the 4x4 block schedule (Queen & Isenhour, 1998). At SSHS, proponents of block scheduling used this argument to bolster support for block scheduling. If a student could take more mathematics courses, could the student complete and understand the curriculum? In order to answer this question we examined 76 sophomores that took more than one mathematics class their freshman year. Of those students one was in the traditional schedule and one was in the block schedule. Seventy-three students who took more than one mathematics class were hybrid. These hybrid students had the opportunity to take the mathematics classes in either a block or traditional format. Twenty-two of the 73 hybrid students took their mathematics classes in a block format, and 51 took their mathematics classes in a traditional format. Table 7 shows the ANCOVA results for mathematics-computation for those hybrid students who took their freshman mathematics classes in either the traditional or block format. Those students who had mathematics for a longer daily period (block) all year scored the same on the ISTEP+ mathematics section as those students in a traditional format after adjusting for CSI and GPA. This result indicates that taking more than one mathematics class does not increase a student's mathematics achievement. Thus, the argument that block scheduling would allow more students to take more mathematics classes is true, the impact of the increased learning is not justified due to the lack of time and curriculum in the mathematics classes due to the shorter class hours in the block format.

Table 7
ANCOVA with Dependent Variable
Mathematics-computation
for Hybrid Sophomores

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
CSI	5560.221	1	5560.221	47.473	.000
CUMGPA	1568.259	1	1568.259	13.390	.000
Format	174.561	1	17.561	.150	.700
Error	8081.619	69	117.125		

Moreover, those hybrid students who took more than one math class their freshman year scored similarly when they took mathematics classes in the block schedule. In essence, the hybrid students who took more than one math class their freshman year not only took math daily, but were immersed in mathematics for a longer period of time every day for an entire year. Even though these students lost content in the block format, they made up for the lose with increased amount of mathematics content at higher levels. These results support the conclusion that mathematics is best learned and understood under a daily format. Also, more time spent on learning mathematics concepts in an extended period seems to reinforce those concepts. In essence, block mathematics is good for taking more mathematics classes and obtaining more graduation credits, but the block format per se does little to increase students' understanding of mathematics.

Another issue is the possible "gap in learning" resulting from a block schedule student taking mathematics his/her first semester freshman year and not taking it again until his/her sophomore year. We were unable to determine the effect of the "gap in learning" associated with the 4x4 block schedule. By looking at the mathematics-computation scores, it would indicate that the "gap in learning" was not a significant factor in mathematics achievement as many previous people have perceived (Kramer, 1996; Wronkovich, Hess, & Robinson, 1997). We can speculate that the "gap in learning" was not an issue since the difference in scores on the mathematics-computation section was not significantly different from those students in the traditional and block schedules (see Table 6).

The results found in this study confirm those found in other studies, while conflicting with some others. Learning mathematics under an extended schedule format (daily and greater than 60 minutes) was advantageous for students using an Advanced Placement achievement test (The College Board, 1998). These results also confirm findings by Cobb, Abate, and Baker (1999). Several studies have reported higher grades for students in block mathematics (e.g., Carroll, 1995; Stennett & Rachar, 1973). In essence, some mathematics results due to scheduling type reported in the literature are tenuous at best. Fewer studies have been completed and reported in the literature using standardized tests (Cobb, Abate, & Baker, 1999; Hess, Wronkovich, & Robinson, 1998; The College Board, 1998).

Conclusions

This study supports the importance of daily instruction and contact time to student achievement in mathematics as distinct from other academic skills. However, the mechanisms that determine this relationship are less clear, and educational policy makers would be unwise to conclude that one type of schedule is generally better than others independent of how different schedules influence the number and type of courses that students take across the secondary curriculum. More research is needed to address the concern of "time-of- discipline." Does a block schedule improve student achievement even when the total amount of time is decreased within discipline areas? Which academic areas are most negatively and positively effected by the switch to a particular schedule type? Should one schedule be the model for all schools? These are important questions that need to be answered by researchers in different academic areas.

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Grade Inflation Rates among Different Ability Students, Controlling for Other Factors

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Abstract

This study compares grade inflation rates among different ability students at a large, open admissions public University. Specifically, this study compares trends in graduating grade point average (GPA) from 1983 to 1996 across low, typical and higher ability students. This study also tests other explanations for increases in graduating GPA. These other explanations are changes in 1) ACT score 2) gender 3) college major and 4) vocational programs. With these other explanations considered, regression results still report an inflationary trend in graduating

GPA. Time, as measured by college entry year, is still a significant positive predictor of GPA. More directly, comparisons of regression coefficients reveal lower ability students as experiencing the highest rate of grade increase. Higher grade inflation rates among low aptitude students suggest that faculty might be using grades to encourage learning among marginal students.

This study compares grade inflation rates among different ability students at a large, open admissions public University. Specifically, this study compares trends in graduating grade point average (GPA) from 1983 to 1996 across low, typical and higher ability students. This study also tests other explanations for increases in graduating GPA. These other explanations are changes in 1) ACT score 2) gender 3) college major and 4) vocational programs. With these other explanations considered, regression results still report an inflationary trend in graduating GPA. Time, as measured by college entry year, is still a significant positive predictor of GPA. More directly, comparisons of regression coefficients reveal lower ability students as experiencing the highest rate of grade increase. Higher grade inflation rates among low aptitude students suggest that faculty might be using grades to encourage learning among marginal students.

In this study, we examine grade inflation at a public open-enrollment university. There has been little attention on grade inflation within public institutions (Moore, 1996 p.2). Yet the media has provided ample coverage of grade inflation at selective colleges and elite universities (see Reibstein and King, 1994; Strauss, 1997; Archibold, 1998; Sowell, 1994; Shea, 1994; Gose, 1997). In fact, a read of the newspaper would even suggest that the steady proliferation of A and B grades and steady climb in grade point average (GPA) is only at issue among top tier institutions. However, a review of a few other reports (Beaver, 1997; Franklin, 1991; Moore, 1996; Stone, 1995; Van Allen, 1990) shows that grade inflation is also a concern within less selective colleges and universities.

This study focuses on an open admission, public university that typically enrolls 13,000 undergraduates annually. The relatively large size of the university, combined with the fact that most other institutions are also relatively non selective in their admissions criteria (Beaver, 1997,p.5), make this study's report on grade inflation more applicable to the vast majority of other colleges and universities than the media focus on grade inflation at top notch institutions. In examining grade inflation, this study examines trends in graduating GPA from 1983 to 1996. Our general findings suggest that students have been graduating with consistently higher grade point averages since 1983. We believe these findings show 'grade inflation' since we statistically controlled for any number of other alternate explanations (justifications) for the rise in graduating GPA. We speak to these other influences in the following section.

However, these general findings are not our most important results. Our most important results are based on further analysis of

graduating GPA with student aptitude. We wondered whether the faculty, over the years, had changed their grading behavior to accommodate one student group over another. Subsequently, we compared rates of grade increases between low, typical and higher ability students over time. Few grade inflation studies have made similar comparisons, though several studies have hinted that grade inflation rates may differ across different student ability groups (Bearden, Wolf and Grosch, 1992 p.740; Kolevzon, 1981 p.200; Prather, Smith and Kodras, 1979 p.20; Sabot and Wakeman-Linn in Shea, 1994, p.A46). Some studies suggest that high ability students gravitate toward departments that hold more stringent grading standards and lower ability students gravitate toward departments that grade higher (Bearden, Wolf and Grosch, 1992 p. 740). On the other hand, Sabot and Wakeman-Linn suggest the reverse, in that traditionally low grading departments have experienced the highest rate of a grade increase (quoted in Shea, 1994, p.A46; also Kolevzon, 1981 p.200; Prather, Smith and Kodras, 1979 p.20). Subsequently, current grade inflation rates might be steepest among the high aptitude student groups. In short, there is some comment to suggest that rates of grade inflation might be related to student ability. This paper examines more fully the extent to which faculty might have altered their grading behavior toward one student group over another.

In making our own distinctions between differences in student aptitude, we relied on student scores on the American College Test (ACT). We acknowledge the potential class bias in using the ACT as an aptitude measure. We remind readers that ACT score, at best, measures college readiness and is not a measure of cognitive ability. Few grade inflation studies have been troubled in using ACT score as a measure of college aptitude. Most studies, for example, that control for an increase in student preparation as an explanation for an increase in grades have relied on the ACT (Breland, 1976; Chesen-Jacobs, Johnson and Keene, 1978; Cluskey, Griffin and Ehlin, 1997; Kwon, Kendig and Bae, 1997 Mullen, 1995; Olsen, 1997; Taylor, 1985; Remegius, 1979). Like other studies, we also use ACT as a statistical control on grade increase. Unlike other studies, we also rely on student ACT to categorize students into low, typical and higher academic ability groups. We then use these distinctions to check for differences in rates of grade inflation between students of low, typical and higher college aptitude. Results show important and significant differences in grade inflation rates between student aptitude groups. These results remain significant upon controlling for the influence of other factors.

Literature Review

Controlling for Other Explanations of Grade Increase

Aptitude

A rise in college grades might be due to other factors other than grade inflation. An increase in high grades, for example, might be due to an increased presence of more college- prepared students. Early studies examined the influence of increased student preparation levels as an explanation for rising grades. Each found little evidence to

suggest that increases in grade point average were due to improvements in student preparation (Breland, 1976; Chesen-Jacobs, Johnson and Keene, 1978; Taylor, 1985; Remegius, 1979). A recent study reaches similar conclusions: Cluskey, Griffin and Ehlin, (1997) find little evidence that increases in GPA are due to an influx of more college able students; in fact, a negative correlation between GPA and ACT is noted (p.274) with grades rising and average ACT declining over the years. Yet other recent studies reach different conclusions. Other studies document a significant rise in student aptitude and preparedness levels over the years at their prospective institutions (Olsen, 1997; Mullen, 1995; Kwon, Kendig and Bae, 1997). Olsen notes that the average incoming student scored in the 90th percentile on the ACT in 1994, whereas in previous years, the typical student ranked in the 70th percentile (p.4). Considering the rising academic caliber of the student body, Olsen suggests that the corresponding increase in student GPA is warranted and not due to an inflationary spiral in college grading (p.7). Mullen, likewise, finds a significant increase in ACT score over the years. He concludes also that the increase in GPA over the years is the result of more college-prepared students (1995, p.12). In short, in identifying grade inflation at prospective institutions, researchers have examined the confounding effect that increases in student aptitude and preparation levels have in explaining grade increase. Researchers, at separate institutions, have reached separate conclusions on whether identified grade rise is the earned result of increases in student preparation levels or the result of grade inflation.

This leads to the standard empirical definition of grade inflation: That is, if grades rise over a period, without a corresponding increase in student aptitude levels (as measured typically through ACT score), then researchers have "probable cause" to assume that grade increase is due to an inflationary trend in faculty grading (Cluskey et al., 1997 p.273; see also Carney, Isakson and Ellsworth, 1978, p.219). This standard definition and how it has been applied in some studies has been improved upon in others: for example, a number of other studies control for other student and institutional-related factors that might explain an increase in high grades besides a rise in ACT score.

Age

Several recent studies, for example, point to the growing presence of older, more mature, serious minded college students as a possible explanation for grade increase. Kwon, Kendig and Bae (1997) note a positive correlation between age and grades: As GPA increased from 1983 to 1993, average student age also increased from 19 to 22 years (p.52); moreover, further tests show student age as a significant positive predictor of student GPA (p.53). Olsen (1997) corroborates this, in that being a mature student, returning to school, served also as a positive predictor of college GPA (p.10). Thus, research suggests that an increase in the number of older, more-serious minded college students may serve to explain an increase in high grades at some institutions.

Gender

Another demographic influence to control for is gender. Early studies noted that the influx of female students in the seventies might explain part of the increase in GPA (Birnbaum, 1977, p.527). A recent national study confirms that female students continue to earn, on average, significantly higher college marks than their male counterparts (Adelman, 1995, p.267). Studies suggest that a notable increase in female students might explain some of the aggregate rise in grade point average. Thus, gender would be another demographic factor to control for before attributing grade increase to grade inflation.

Course Withdrawals

Apart from demographic shifts, many studies note institutional changes that might explain a rise in high grades. Some studies, for example, cite university changes in withdrawal policies as a contributing explanation for rising grade point average (Chesen-Jacobs, Johnson and Keene, 1978 p.14; Hoyt and Reed, 1976). Universities that implement more lenient withdrawal policies make it easier for students to withdrawal from courses that threaten their grade point average (Weller, 1986 p.125). While faculty might continue to grade the same, GPA might climb due to more liberal withdrawal policies. This would be another factor to consider before implicating faculty of grade inflation.

College Major

Other studies comment that the migration of student majors from low to high grading departments is a principal factor behind grade inflation (Bearden, Wolfand Grosch, 1992; Prather, Smith and Kodras, 1979; Sabot and Wakeman-Linn, 1991; Summerville, Ridley and Maris, 1990). According to this view, not all academic departments are equally responsible for grade inflation as far as faculty in certain disciplines might inflate grades more so than others. Lanning and Perkins (1995) note that faculty in the College of Education are often indicted as contributing more to grade inflation because of more emphasis on mastery learning approaches and more collaborative relations with students as future teachers. Here, a movement of students into the education field might lead to an aggregate rise in GPA of which not all faculties in all departments are responsible. Other studies note that to counteract the flight of students to higher GPA departments, traditionally low grading departments might be inflating grades more in order recruit and retain majors (Sabot and Wakeman-Linn in Shea, 1994,p. A46).

Vocational Programs

Other studies have attributed aggregate grade increase to increases in vocational programs within the university (Sabot and Wakeman-Linn, 1991, p.159).Such programs, they have argued, grade more on mastery and learning competency models than other more academic departments (Goldman, 1985, p.103). If more A and B grades are awarded in job-oriented programs more than in other college departments than an increase of students into more vocational

oriented curriculums might account for an aggregate rise in high grades. This would then be another factor to control for before charging faculty with grade inflation.

In summary, prior research reports a half dozen other plausible explanations for an aggregate increase in GPA other than faculty simply dispensing higher marks. These other possible explanations are 1) An increase in student aptitude and preparedness levels, 2) an increase in older, more mature college students, 3) an increase in the number of female students, 4) an increase in leniency in university withdrawal policy 5) an increase of students into higher grading departments and 6) an increase in students into more vocationally oriented college programs. Each of these increases might explain or justify an aggregate increase in grade point average over the years. In this study, we control for these other plausible influences prior to identifying grade trends as "grade inflation."

Research Design

Sample Controls

Age. The influence of age on grades is held constant in our analyses through requesting a homogenous sample of traditional college-age students. Our student sample consists of students that entered the university as full time freshmen, in which the average entering age of students in our sample is nineteen years. (S.E.=.05). With age held constant across our sample, an increase in graduating GPA within our sample is not to be attributed to changes in student age.

For each year of our investigation, we randomly selected 500 records of entering full time freshmen, which resulted in a relative large panel of freshmen records. Yet like inflation, retention is also an issue in public, open-enrollment universities and not all students in our initial panel went on to graduate. As a result, our analysis of trends in graduating GPA is based on 1,986 graduating seniors, -that entered the university as full time freshmen, between 1983 and 1992. Our data is more up to date than what is implied: Students that entered in 1992, for example, have had time to graduate. Subsequently, data on graduating GPA is recorded up through and including the 1996 graduating year.

University Withdrawal Policy. Liberal changes in university withdrawal policies might explain an increase in average GPA. Students might use liberal withdrawal options to withdraw from courses that they are failing or that threatens their GPA. This, however, is not a notable influence in our analysis since our University started a more liberal withdrawal policy approximately the same time that our analysis of grade trends begins. The second year of our 14-year investigation (1984/85) our university adopted a more lenient withdrawal policy. Under the policy, students have up to eight weeks of class to withdraw from a course and receive a generic"W". Before the change in policy, withdrawal while failing (w/F) or withdrawal while passing (w/P) was noted on the student transcript. Thus, from

1983/84 to 1984/85 the number of students using their withdrawal options increased significantly and has remained steady over the remaining thirteen years of our analysis. (Note 1)

Statistical Controls

We statistically control influences of aptitude, gender, college major and vocational program on graduating GPA. To control influences of changes in student aptitude levels, data on ACT score are used. In using ACT as a control on aptitude, we adjusted pre-1989 student scores to equate with post- 1989 enhanced version scores based on the standard ACT conversion chart. By adjusting pre-1989 scores, this allows for more accurate comparisons in ACT score across time.

To control for the influence of an increase in female students, gender enters the analysis as a dummy variable (0=male, 1= female). To account for shifts in student major composition as another explanation for grade increase, we based our control at the college level. Table 1 lists the nine colleges, along with the corresponding average graduating GPA for our sample of full-time entering freshmen. A review of Table 1 indicates notable differences in average graduating grade point average across colleges. Students in the College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences (Mean GPA Grad = 3.16, S.E.=.042) and the College of Education (Mean GPA Grad = 3.04, S.E.=.025) receive, on average, higher grades over our 14-year period. Consequently, a migration of students into either one of these two departments over the years would lead to a natural bump in graduating GPA that wouldn't necessarily implicate individual faculty for grade inflation. To control for this influence, graduating averages (listed in Table 1) are included as a control variable in our analysis.

Table 1
Average Graduating GPA by College, 1983-1996

College	Average Graduating GPA
College of Allied Health and Nursing	2.76 (.029)
College of Arts and Technology	3.05 (.026)
College Arts and Humanities	3.00 (.038)
College of Business	2.84 (.025)
College of Education	3.09 (.025)
College of Health, P.E., and Recreation	2.81 (.036)
College of Law Enforcement	2.82 (.029)
College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences	3.17 (.042)
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	2.94 (.030)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

To determine the influence of vocational programs on grade inflation, we dummied college major into the following categories. The College of Law Enforcement, which contains the programs of police studies, correctional services and fire safety and the College of Applied Arts and Technology, which contains the programs of agriculture, military science, human environmental science, along with several other programs, were both coded into one category (=1), while other Colleges (listed in Table 1) were coded into the other (=0). This dummy variable therefore estimates the influence of vocational programs on graduating GPA.

Measuring Rates of Grade Inflation We use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to examine the extent of grade inflation on graduating GPA by student entry year. Under the null hypothesis of no inflation, student entry year should not be a significant predictor of graduating GPA. That is, time of entry into the University should not influence grade point average. Yet, under conditions of grade inflation, time becomes an important influence on GPA, with recently enrolled students earning significantly higher grade point averages upon graduation than students of ten years prior. Moreover, if student entry year is a significant predictor of graduating GPA, then we would expect it to remain significant when other possible explanations (controls) are added into the regression analysis.

Measuring Student Ability Levels The principal purpose of this study is to compare grade trends between students of varying incoming ability. To make such comparisons, we base our distinctions on the ACT quartile and inter quartile ranges of our sample. This results in the following subgroups: Students with composite ACT scores between 10 through 17, between 18 through 21, and greater than or equal to 22 are respectively categorized as low, typical and higher ability students.

Separate OLS regression analyses are then used to compare differences in grade inflation rates between these student aptitude groups. To determine whether observed differences in rates of a grade increase between student groups represent significant differences ($p<.05$), we then examine the combined interaction affect of ACT subgroups with student entry year. We explain this procedure in more detail below.

Regression Results

Table 2 summarizes our regression results. Model A reports the influence of student entry year, and other potential influences, on graduating GPA for our full sample (n=1,986) of graduating full time freshmen. Significant slope coefficients on each of our control variables suggest that each is important to graduating GPA. For example, regression results report gender as a significant influence on graduating GPA. Regression results report female students graduating, on average, with significantly higher grade point averages than male students. Moreover, gender remains a significant predictor when college major and ACT score are controlled in the regression. This suggests that the higher aggregate GPA among female students is not only due to females migrating to higher grading departments but indicates, irrespective of college major as well as ACT score, that female students tend to graduate with grade point averages .123 points higher than their male counterparts. In short, regression results on gender show, following national trends, that female college students are more grade conscious than male college students.

Table 2
Graduating GPA: Regression Estimates of Grade Inflation, 1983-1996:
Full-time Entering Freshmen

	Model A Full Sample	**Model B** Low ACT Students (ACT 10 - 17)	**Model C** Typical ACT Students (ACT 18 - 21)	**Model D** Upper ACT Student (ACT > 21)
n, sample size	1,968	379	896	693
R^2, squared mult. R	.308	.18	.13	.22
b_0, intercept	-.018 (.182)	-.021 (.438)	-.71 (.35)	.60 (.330)
Student Entry Year	.021*** (.003)	.031*** (.006)	.018*** (.004)	.019*** (.005)
ACT score	.053*** (.002)	.035** (.013)	.059*** (.011)	.058*** (.006)
Gender	.136*** (.018)	.122*** (.037)	.065* (.026)	.229*** (.031)
Average College GPA	.570*** (.065)	.665*** (.145)	.785*** (.095)	.305** (.110)
Interaction Effects				
Low vs. typical ACT X Student Entry Year	.014* (.006)			
Low vs. higher ACT X Student Entry Year	.018 (.054)			
Typical vs higher ACT X Student EntryYear	-.008 (.032)			

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

* $p < .05$; * * $p < .01$; * * * $p < .001$

But our emphasis in not on the influence of gender, nor ACT scores, nor college major in predicting GPA upon graduation. These are added as controls in our analysis to determine whether increases in graduating GPA are the result of grade inflation or these factors. With these other influences controlled for, Model A reports a significant slope coefficient for student entry year. This shows that the year of entry into the university is a significant predictor of graduating GPA despite changes in ACT score, gender and college major. The slope coefficient for student entry year (b_1=.021) shows a steady increase in graduating GPA from 1983 to 1996. The coefficient shows an approximate rise of .021 grade points annually since 1983. Looked at over a five-year trajectory, regression results estimate that graduating GPA has risen, on average, more than one tenth (.1) of a grade point every five years since 1983.

Models B, C and D compare grade inflation rates between low, typical and higher ability students. Slope coefficients on student entry year for each model are revealing. Comparisons of coefficients across models for student entry year show the rate of inflation in graduating GPA to be higher for low aptitude students than for other student subgroups. Regression coefficients measure grade inflation rate for typical and upper ACT students at an annual rate of increase of .018 (Model C) and .019 (Model D) grade points respectively. By contrast, the rate of grade inflation for lower aptitude students (Model B) was estimated at increasing .031 grade points annually. This suggests that nearly every three years since 1983, lower aptitude students have experienced an average increase of one-tenth of a grade point (.1) rise in graduating GPA.

To determine whether these differences in rates of a grade increase represent significant differences, we tested the dummy interaction on ACT subgroups with student entry year. A significant coefficient on this variable would indicate that ACT subgroup and year of entry interact to predict graduating GPA. This would suggest important ACT subgroup differences in grade inflation rates across time. The first tested interaction of low (=1) versus typical (=0) ACT subgroups with student entry year is significant. This suggests an important difference in rates of grade inflation between low versus typical ACT students, with low aptitude students experiencing significantly higher rates of grade inflation. On the other hand, results report a non significant interaction between low (=0) and higher (=1) aptitude students and student entry year. Therefore, results show no important difference in grade inflation rates between low versus higher aptitude students. Finally, results also report a non significant interaction between typical (=0) and higher (=1) aptitude students and student entry year. This also shows no important difference in annual rates of grade increase between typical and higher ability students. In summary, interaction effects report higher grade inflation rates for lower aptitude students in comparison to typical ability students.

Table 3 reports our final control of vocational programs on grade inflation. The influence of job-oriented programs on grade trends among lower ACT students might be most relevant, since less college prepared students may more likely enroll in college programs that provide more job-related training. This may be an important control variable in explaining increases in grade point average among less college ready students especially.

Table 3
Graduating GPA:
Regression Estimates of Grade Inflation, 1983-1996
Controlling for the Influence of Vocational Programs

	Model A Full Sample	**Model B** Low ACT Students (ACT 10 - 17)
n, sample size	1708	297
R^2, squared mult. R	.28	.18
b_0, intercept	1.58 (.055)	1.86 (.228)
Student Entry Year	.023*** (.003)	.034*** (.007)
ACT Score	.055*** (.003)	.035* (.014)
Gender	.196*** (.019)	.207*** (.041)
Vocational	.032 (.021)	.018 (.048)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.
* $p < .05$; * * $p < .01$; * * * $p < .001$

Model A in Table 3 reports the influence and control of vocational programs on graduating GPA for our full sample. With vocational curriculums included as a control variable, entry year remains a separate and significant influence on GPA upon graduation. This suggests that our initial assumption that part of the rise in graduating GPA might be the result of a migration of students into more jobs-related curriculums is neither a strong nor partial explanation for the identified grade rise in graduating GPA. The same findings apply to lower aptitude students (Model B). Vocational programs were not significant predictors of graduating GPA nor were they important controls in explaining grade inflation among lower aptitude students.

Conclusion

With any number of aptitude, institutional and other demographic factors held constant in our analysis, our general regression model reports a consistent climb in graduating GPA from 1983 to 1996. Further, our subgroup models show an even higher rate of grade inflation among the lower aptitude student group over the years. Moreover, by controlling the influence of other institutional and demographic explanations on grade rise, we believe we have isolated the aspect of grade increase that might be due to individual faculty changes in grading behavior. Considering, for example, the substantial increase in grade point average among lower aptitude students, our

findings show that faculty seem to be more benevolent in assigning grades to low ability students than perhaps fourteen years ago. This suggests a possible change in faculty grading behavior in that faculty might increasingly be relying on grades to encourage and stimulate learning among more marginal students.

In short, it seems as if faculties at open-admissions universities may embrace the equalizing mission of higher education more so than faculties at selective colleges and elite universities. In the classroom, this might mean that faculty are dismantling the hierarchy of learning that is implied by a normal distribution of grades. Outside the classroom, this might mean that faculty are grappling with broader issues of opportunity and social mobility (Birnbaum, 1977, pp. 523-524). During the Vietnam War, for example, grades took on deeper significance than a report on course performance. Likewise, college grades today may carry deeper significance as far as a college degree becomes increasingly, a prerequisite for future economic survival. Consequently, faculty today, as during the Vietnam War, might be giving more good grades because of their future concern for students generally, and for more marginal students especially.

All told, grade inflation has been proscribed as faculty failure to impart meaningful distinctions between students. Thus, it supposedly shows lack of faculty accountability to students, parents and to the larger society. Yet grade inflation might go beyond finger pointing and front accusations, and might reflect a complex social mix where faculty -through grades-might be trying to foster positive feeling toward learning and where faculty, might be awarding higher marks to confer the necessary credentials and future prospects of employment and job security on outgoing students. On its face, these may be both benign even benevolent approaches to the meaning and purpose grades. Yet we wonder ourselves whether grades are the appropriate mechanism from which to tackle burning issues of mobility, opportunity and job security. On this latter dimension, we wonder whether such a program of grade encouragement and credentialing, might not reinforce an ideology of equal opportunity through education. Thus, rather than ameliorating the current system of economic inequities and class hierarchy, current grading trends might be providing the necessary justifying ideology for it.

Note

1. Data obtained from our Office of Institutional Research reports the percentage of course withdrawals for each of the years of our investigation as the following: 1983/84=4.76; 1984/85=7.04; 1985/86=6.93; 1986/87=7.03; 1987/88=7.17 1988/89=7.37 1989/90=7.68 1990/91=8.25 1991/92=8.33 1992/93=9.09 1993/94=10.06 1994/95=9.64 1995/196=9.24.

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Children's Rights and Education in Argentina, Chile and Spain

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Abstract
This article is a first attempt to relate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to education policy. It compares three countries, Argentina, Chile and Spain in an attempt to both present particular problems that are of pressing concern in each and to propose a framework that might reveal some possible obstacles to the implementation of children's rights. The article is divided into three sections. In the first section, a comparative review of the formal dispositions and legislative changes in the three countries is presented. Some of the most notable contrasts are briefly contextualized in the history of each nation-state. In the second section, particular problems in each nation are reassessed through the lens of the Convention. Three cases are examined: in Argentina, the funding and organization of public compulsory education; in Chile, an instance of international cooperation in education; in Spain, the relations between public and private education and ethnic segregation. Finally, a general framework is discussed using these three cases as examples.

Introduction

A tenet of modernity is to consider education as one of the most important means of advancing a society and enhancing the quality of life of its citizens. Contrary to common thinking, this idea (as captured in proposals such as universal compulsory education or public funding of schools) has been forwarded by European, North American and South American countries since the middle of the nineteenth century. After World War II, with the consolidation of the "welfare state," the commitment to education has been greatly increased; and the development of strong state educational systems is currently considered a bastion of a country's social capacity.

Such commitments represent general ideas that can lead to several different, and even incompatible, interpretations and consequences. Therefore, it is necessary to try to understand how these expressins of commitment can be translated into specific and coherent proposals. The agenda set by the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (also referred to here as "the Convention") advances education as a fundamental right and provides guidelines for its implementation. However, many other problems remain

unresolved, allowing for great variability among nation-states in how this right is provided to children. Some of the pressing concerns include issues such as: what are the resources needed to provide quality education? how can education act to lessen socio-economic inequalities? what is the nature of international cooperation programs? what is the commitment of countries with scarce (or not so scarce) resources to education?

These questions work on two distinct but interrelated dimensions. At one level, there is the problem of interpreting the meaning of the articles of the Convention. The proposals of this document are the result of particular historical and social constructions of childhood (Casas, 1998). Discussions about the implications of the Convention can have more impact than would be apparent at first glance. As a binding document for those countries that have ratified it, it may be used as a legal instrument both at the national and supra-national level. For example, in the European Union the European Court of Justice has the capacity to overturn judicial decisions and procedures established at the state level and may use as a referent the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* since it is a document ratified by all its members (Verhellen, 1997). Currently, this is becoming clear as the tragic and much publicized "Thompson and Venables" case is being reviewed by the European Court with potential implications for legal procedures in England and Wales (Jones, 1997). At a second level, children's rights are social practices and in particular formal education is an institution that stems from the ideals and practical constraints that states and citizens put into operation. The heterogeneity, contradictions and divergent interests of different social groups and institutions account for the range of forms of schooling that one finds across and within nation.

Interest in these topics has been increasing in recent years and is supported by the existence of a European Network on Children's Rights and work currently being done on the topic in the Department of Developmental and Educational Psychology of the Autonomous University of Madrid. As a result, the authors of this article began discussing these matters and contrasting our different experiences. As researchers and educational professionals from three different countries (Argentina, Chile and Spain), several contrasts and questions emerged when we discussed some of the issues that the Convention poses. These three countries reflect diverse and complex realities and, although they also share certain historical and cultural ties, are located in different regions of the world with their own social and economic history. Currently, Latin America (including Chile and Argentina) is experiencing important social, political and economic changes. Formal education and the life conditions of children are clearly part of these transformations and deserve attention. Spanish educational policy is in a period of rapid and significant transformation, resulting from the full implementation of an educational reform begun at the turn of the decade of the 1990s and the political changes occurring at this time (Marchesi y Martín, 1998). *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) has been ratified by all three countries, and thus can be used as a lens to probe and contrast the characteristics of the three nations. Most importantly, it can be used as an instrument to highlight and

interpret selected problems being experienced by each country.

This article is a first attempt to elucidate this topic and is primarily concerned with establishing some base-line questions and data that may allow further research on particular problems. A description at the formal level, especially contrasting Spain and Latin American countries, can be of more interest than initially apparent. As Spanish and Latin American educational research and policy are construed, it seems that Spain is placed in a consulting position, offering services and standards that Latin American countries have not attained. Such a claim may be supportable as it relates to the economic and political resources that can be mobilized currently in each nation. Yet, as we will see, this view is not accurate with respect to the intentions and efforts that have taken place in education in the second half of this century in Spain, Chile or Argentina. The political history and legislative developments in education on each side of the Atlantic have had their own evolution and ideological sources, without Spain being a specific referent for Argentina or Chile during most of this time. A case analysis of each situation allows us to delve into educational and social problems that are of utmost concern. In particular, analyzing them against some of the tenets of the Convention introduces new possibilities that are less often explored in discussions of these topics.

The presentation is divided into three parts. First, a comparative analysis of the formal arrangements and legal dispositions proposed by the three countries regarding education will be made. This permits an assessment of those aspects in which they converge, in which they diverge and what may be the underlying reasons for these commonalties and variations. Second, a case analysis will be presented of each country. The cases analyses are not structured according to the same questions in the three contexts. Our choice has been to present instances in each nation that are both of interest to us and have been controversial in educational discussions of each country, thus presenting a small portrait of trends and tensions in each region. Finally, we forward a conceptual framework, using the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) as a matrix, that may allow to make some generalizations on the type of situations these cases represent.

Meeting Children's Rights and Education at the Formal Level

A number of articles in the Convention make reference directly or indirectly to what goals and conditions should be part of an educational system that meets children's rights. Based on the content of the articles it is possible to arrange them under four thematic clusters:

- The means that make education accessible.
- The means that support education in groups with special needs.
- Curricular and pedagogical goals.
- The rights of specific social groups.

Table 1
Formalization of Rights Regarding the Means to Make Education Accessible

KEY RIGHTS	ARGENTINA	CHILE	SPAIN
FREE AND COMPULSORY PRIMARY EDUCATION (art. 28-1a).	Compulsory Education from 5 to 14 years of age: Last year of pre-school (5 years of age) *General Basic Education* (6-14 years of age).	Compulsory Education from 6 to 13 years of age: *General Basic Education* (6-13 years of age).	Compulsory Education from 6 to 16 years of age: *Primary Education* (6-12 years of age). *Compulsory Secondary Education* (13-16 years of age).
DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESIBLE PROFESSIONAL AND GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION (art. 28-1b).	*Polimodal Education (15-17 years of age):* *humanistic, social and scientific and technical (1 extra year) tracks.*	*Secondary Education (14-18 years of age):* *scientific, humanistic and technical-professional (1 extra year) tracks.*	*Pre-university Baccalaureate (16-18 years of age): humanistic, social and scientific tracks.* *Professional Education (two cycles, 16-19/19-21 years of age): multiple professional modules.*
ACCESIBLE HIGHER EDUCATION, BASED ON CAPACITY (art. 28-1c).	Open admission to the *General Basic Cycle* at Public Universities. Upon successful completion, access to degree cycle.	Access to Public University determined by *National Aptitude Test* developed by the Ministry of Education.	Access to University determined by: *Selective Exam*, organized by the public universities, and grades during pre-university education.
DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION AND ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING PROGRAMS (art. 28-1d).	*Psychophysical Units at the district level: composed by social workers, psychologists and doctors.* *Orientation Departments at the universities.*	*Psychopedagogical Teams at the district level.* *A professional and academic counselor in each secondary school.*	*Psychopedagogical Teams at the district level for primary schools.* *Psychopedagogical Orientation Teams in each secondary school.*

Table 1 summarizes which dispositions in each country make education accessible. Art. 28 aims at making at least basic education

compulsory (sect. 1a), developing secondary education both in its academic and professional strands (sect. 1b), making higher education accessible to larger parts of the population based on capacity criteria (sect. 1c), and providing counseling and support services to students during their education (sect. 1d). At one level there appears to be much agreement in these issues, since all countries have engaged in educational reforms (all three passed legislation in the 1990's) that meet these demands, and these new policies mostly propose arrangements that address the same principles. However, there are a number of interesting contrasts, most notably the number of years of compulsory education and the age-range in which it is placed.

The beginning of compulsory education ranges from 5 (Argentina) to 6 years of age (Chile and Spain) and the ending ranges from 13 (Chile) to 16 years of age (Spain). Within the educational system, this allows for a variety of arrangements, from making the last year of kindergarten compulsory in the case of Argentina to having separate secondary compulsory education in the case of Spain. These variations are the result of the policy design and practical constraints in the arrangement of the educational system but may also reflect important social issues. At the entry level, although pre- school education is encouraged and supported for several theoretical-pedagogical reasons, making it compulsory is intertwined with social factors. In Spain, the implicit push for early childhood education has been related to the increasing number of middle-class mothers working outside the home; this began to become a priority in the 1980's with some municipalities (primarily in large cities) establishing early education centers. However, in Chile and Argentina, early childhood education began over thirty years ago as part of the extension of education to larger sectors of the population; thus in its origins it was directed to lower-working class children and families. With regard to school exit, it is important to consider how well "harmonized" are the legal minimum age to enter the workforce (or apprenticeship arrange- ments) and the end of compulsory education--as we will see below the two are not always coordinated, thus the mismatch has been a contributing factor in different legal reforms.

Finally, Argentina's policy regarding entrance at public universities is noteworthy. An important political claim during its democratic transition was making university education tuition-free and open (unrestricted) access to all students who had completed pre-university secondary education. This goal was achieved, making Argentina the only country of those studied here (and also contrasting with many other countries in the world) with an open admissions policy that makes higher education accessible to a much larger student population than before. However, this has introduced other "mechanisms" that are not common in the rest of the countries, such as dividing higher education into a "general" cycle and a "degree" cycle with a series of selection exams between each stage.

Table 2
Formalization of Rights Regarding
Support Conditins for Populations with Special Needs

KEY RIGHTS	ARGENTINA	CHILE	SPAIN
ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND OTHER FORMS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION FOR PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN (art. 23-3).	Legislation regarding the social integration for people with special needs. Special Education with specific professionals.	Specialists in each school to attend students with learning difficulties. Special Education schools, organized by type of handicap. Mainstreaming for some students.	Special Education schools. Mainstreaming programs.
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN CASE OF NEED, AT ALL EDUCATIONAL LEVELS (art. 28-1b).	Financial assistance during compulsory education: family subsidies, meal programs, grants for school materials. Scholarship programs for post-compulsory education.	Free school texts in primary education. *President of the Republic* school grants (meal programs, school materials). Grants for secondary and higher education.	Support during primary education and early childhood education: meal programs, school material grants. Grants for secondary and higher education.
PROGRAMS TO INCREASE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (art. 28-1e).	Legislation regarding programs to facilitate and guarantee school completion.	Very low attrition rates. Objective of financial support programs (see above).	Social Work programs and action plans in rural areas and socio-economically disadvantaged urban areas. Objective of financial support (see above).
LEGISLATION REGARDING MINIMUN WORK AGE AND PROTECTION AGAINST CHILD LABOR (arts. 32-1; 32-2a).	Minimum work age: 15.	Minimum work age: 15.	Minimum work age: 16.

To make educational rights effective, the Convention explicitly discusses the arrangements that should be provided for certain groups. Art 23-3 discusses the accommodations that should be made for children with disabilities, including those that relate to making education accessible. Arts. 28-1b-1e, 32-1 and 32-2a make reference to provisions that seem necessary to make education accessible to students from underprivileged circumstances. As reflected in Table 2, at one level all countries seem to have formalized these points in the educational system. Special Education arrangements for "gross

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disabilities" (physical, mental handicap) exist from the beginning of childhood education, both in separate special-needs schools/units and in "mainstreaming" programs; and screening/educational adaptations for students with learning difficulties start in primary education. Some private organizations in each country (*O.N.C.E* in Spain, *Teleton* in Chile) play an important role in providing resources for children with special needs, both inside their institutions and in public schools. Also, several efforts exist to support underprivileged students, such as free-lunch programs and nutritional supplements, scholarships and financial assistance. However, the disparity of circumstances in which these arrangements are implemented make comparisons very difficult, since target populations range from urban low- class students to extremely isolated rural and indigenous populations.

An important contrast is the minimum age for entering the workforce. Spain is the only one of the three nations in which this age is the same as the end of compulsory education, an arrangement that began with the 1990 educational reform (before this compulsory education ended at 14 years of age, while the minimum age to work was 16). In the rest of the countries, the minimum working age is one or two years above the end of compulsory education, which leaves an uncertain gap for youths who abandon school early.

Table 3
Formalization of Rights Regarding
Curricular and Pedagogical Objectives

KEY RIGHTS	ARGENTINA	CHILE	SPAIN
EDUCATION GEARED TOWARDS THE FULL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S PERSONALITY, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CAPACITIES (art. 29-1a).	Legislation states that "education should provide permanent and integral instruction so students can self-realize as persons".	Legislation proposes that education should enhance the correct development of children's personality, physical and mental capacities. At the beginning of the school year students pass a medical examination.	Each educational level (pre-school, primary and secondary) states a series of curricular and educational goals.
EDUCATION RESPECTFUL OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS EXPRESSED BY THE UNITED NATIONS (art. 29-1b).	Legislation embracing these principles in education. Cross-curriculum themes.	Legislation embracing these principles in education. Cross-curriculum themes.	Cross-curriculum themes.
EDUCATION RESPECTFUL OF NATIONAL AND FAMILY CULTURAL VALUES (art. 29-1c).	Legislation making this explicit.	Legislation upholding the right for parents to choose schools for their children.	Part of the curriculum Regional de-centralization allows for regional subject curriculum.
EDUCATION IN TOLERANCE AND RESPECT FOR GENDER, ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES (art. 29-1d).	Mentioned as a general principle of the *Federal Law of Education*.	Mentioned as a general principle of the *Organic Law of Education*.	Cross-curricular theme.
EDUCATION RESPECTFUL OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (art. 29-1e).	Cross-curricular themes.	Ecology as a curricular subject.	Part of the Natural Sciences curriculum. Cross-curricular theme.
DISCIPLINE RESPECTFUL OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND DIGNITY (art. 28-2).	Legislation banning physical punishment as a disciplinary measure.	Legislation banning physical punishment as a disciplinary measure.	Legislation banning physical punishment as a disciplinary measure.

The Convention throughout Article 29-1 makes a series of general recommendations about the values and objectives that education should pursue. Education should contribute to the full

development of the child (art 29-1a) and teach respect and appreciation for human rights (art. 29-1b), national and personal values (art. 29-1c), values and cultures others than one's own (art. 29-1d), gender equality (art. 29-1d) and the natural environment (art. 29-1e). Table 3 reveals that the three countries have some curricular arrangements or general statements that attempt to develop these ideas. These are developed either as cross-curricular themes--the preferred arrangement in Spain--or specific subjects--as in Chile where Ecology is a distinct content area in schools. Finally, all countries (in line with art. 28-2) have banned physical punishment as a disciplinary measure in schools.

Table 4
Formalization of Rights Regarding Specific Social Groups

KEY RIGHTS	ARGENTINA	CHILE	SPAIN
RIGHTS OF ETHNIC, LINGUISTIC, RELIGIOUS AND INDIGENOUS MINORITIES TO HAVE THEIR OWN CULTURAL LIFE (art. 30).	Legislation regarding: The right of indigenous populations to preserve their cultural life and the learning of their mother-tongue language. The development by the state of indigenous educational programs. The adequacy of the educational resources to regional needs. The right of students to preserve their religious, moral and political convictions.	Legislation recognizing Mapuche (the largest indigenous group) as an official language. Used as language of instruction in *Basic Education*. Catholic Religion as an optional subject.	Catholic Religion as an optional subject, other religions not available unless specifically organized at the school. Autonomous communities with co-official languages (Euskera, Galician and Catalonian) have bilingual education.
CAPACITY OF PARTICULARS TO RUN THEIR OWN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (art. 29-2).	Legislation regarding the supervision and granting of capacity to set-up private schools. *Subsidized* private schools by the state.	Legislation allowing particulars or private entities to collaborate with the State in Educational matters. *Subsidized* private schools by the state.	Legislation regulating the functioning of private schools. *Concert* systems to state-fund privately run schools.

All countries have a number of social groups that have made claims for special arrangements in education. Table 4 shows how on the one hand, in all countries private groups have been able to develop educational institutions parallel to state-run schools (cf. the convention (art. 29-2)). Institu- tions in all countries are required to meet a series of legal dispositions and criteria set by the state (or public educational authority), and all countries have arrangements for providing financial support to certain private schools. For example, in Spain the Catholic Church was the primary provider of education until the 1980's; the *concert* system was developed to allow the Church to continue playing this role without expense to families.

Indigenous populations and other minorities must be acknowledged in the educational system as proposed in art. 30 of the

convention. In the case of Argentina and Chile, several instructional (including bilingual education or native culture curricula) arrangements exist for indigenous populations. In the case of Spain, the main developments have been made at the regional level, including local-regional history as part of the curriculum and bilingual education in those regions with languages other that Spanish. However, very little is developed regarding minority populations in the country such as gypsies or immigrant groups that are not part of compensatory education programs. Finally, Catholic religious education is available as an optional subject in public schools of Chile and Spain.

This summary reflects how children's rights have been introduced at the formal level in the educational policies of each country. An overview of these data shows a wide degree of consensus and some particular contrasts. However, children's rights as social practices are poorly reflected at the formal level. It is the real conditions of the day-to-day schooling of children that reflect how rights are put into effect. To analyze this completely for each country is an insurmountable task, however it is possible to present a particular aspect of each nation. This choice to focus on a few particular aspects is justified both because it captures current debates in the educational community of that society and highlights a relevant dimension of children's rights.

Case Studies of Children's Rights and Education

Focusing on particular examples provides another perspective on children's rights. The political and daily realities of work in schools are put on the foreground. The goal of this section is to present example of this. The problems facing educational resources in Argentina serve as an example of the obstacles that may exist to providing compulsory education to all (art. 28-1a). Chile's cooperative experience is a good example of how to pursue international cooperation in line with art. 28-3. Spain's distribution of students in schools along ethnic and class lines reflects the political controversies around art. 28-1 and 29-2 regarding equality of educational opportunity and private education.

A. Children's Rights and Quality Compulsory Education in Argentina

Argentina is a large and complex country of which it is difficult to make reference to a single national reality. On the one hand, it has an area of more than 2 million square kilometers, with vast regional and climatic differences. On the other hand, the population is distributed very irregularly: 46% of the population lives in the capital, Buenos Aires, and its province. These characteristics account for important social differences that make the discussion of averages and general indicators (illiteracy rates, schooled population and the like) neither very informative of differences inside the country nor illuminative of international contrasts (van den Eynden, 1993).

Argentina, like other Latin American countries, is confronted

with high external debt that greatly affects its chances of development. This economic situation has led to a series of adjustment policies that particularly affect social and educational funding. Another important aspect of these policies has been the privatization of public services. All these measures have increased unemployment and a widened the socio-economic division in the population. The effect of this situation is not clearly reflected in quantitative assessments of education nor in the elaboratin of formal policy, but it has had an important impact on the quality of the education that students receive in Argentina (van den Eynden, 1993).

Since 1993, Argentina operated under new educational policies developed in the *Federal Law of Education.* According to this legislation, the educational system is divided into three levels: initial (3 years), *General Basic Education* (9 years) and *Polimodal* (3 years). Compulsory education covers the last year of the initial level (pre-school) and the nine years of *G.B.E.* This reform represents a very important step, since it restructured a highly outdated educational system developed over a century ago (*Law 1.420*, written in 1884) in very different political conditions. This reform not only extends compulsory education but modifies important aspects of it such as: implementing a democratic and federalized educational bureaucracy, a reaffirmation of the state in educational matters, a formalization of financial mechanisms and a commitment to procedures geared towards quality education (*Ministerio de Cultura y Educación de la Nación,* 1994).

As part of these principles, the government has established programs aimed at the improvement of educational outcomes in populations "that have not covered their basic needs" (as they are defined by the Ministry of Culture and Education). In a recent letter to the Argentinian representative of the International Monetary Fund, the Minister of Education, Susana Decibe (1998), claimed that the quality of education has been enhanced between 12% and 24% in different regions, this improvement being highest in the regions with the largest proportion of socio-economically disadvantaged populations. Also, net proportions of school attendance have increased significantly during the 1990's.

However, as stated above, these general indicators obscure differences between contexts. Data from the *Fifth National Quality Assessment Program*, developed by the Ministry of Education in 1997 higlight these differences: urban schools have higher scores than rural schools, private education surpasses public education, and the differences among provinces continue to be high (*Clarin*, 21 May, 1998). During 1998, only five made significant strides toward educational reform (*Clarin*, 17 May, 1998). These measures affect mainly the implementation of the third cycle of *G.B.E* and involve 1) hiring new teachers, with specialized qualifications; 2) restructuring infrastructures; 3) administrative re-organization. Measures that mostly depend on financial resources were lacking. These changes can be progressive and should be completed by the year 2000; however, recent reports indicate that half of the provinces will have trouble meeting this deadline (*Clarin*, 17 May, 1998).

These actions could be interpreted as an indication that educational reform is being undertaken, albeit slower and with less impressive results than expected. Nevertheless, this interpretation does not capture instances in which measures are undertaken that are clearly contrary to educational reform. For example, the province of Cordoba (fifth largest and third most populated province of the country) accepted the educational reform but subsequently decreased by 50% its role in education. As described by Puiggros (1996), Cordoba transfered schools to the municipalities and the private sector and concentrated or closed a number of secondary schools. Furthermore, the province's government reduced primary education to six years and made the seventh year part of secondary education in line with suggestions made by the World Bank for reducing educational investments (Puiggros, 1996; Akkari and Pérez, 1999). The consequence of this measure is that reaching the sixth grade of primary education will be a goal very difficult to attain for large sectors of the population. This means that although in Argentina the law states ten years of education are compulsory, in several instances the educational system cannot guarantee the infrastructures, human and social resources to provide six years of compulsory schooling--situation that compromises greatly the efficacy of art. 28-1a of the Convention.

B. International Cooperation and Educational Improvement in Chile

International Cooperation in the area of education is stressed in art. 28-3 of the Convention. The history of these programs in Chile goes back about two decades and is related to the social and political changes that the country has suffered during this period. Sweden has played a significant role in bi-lateral and cooperative agreements during this time, with programs that have been especially effective in the area of education. An important characteristic of its approach to cooperation is a focus on democratization, economic reform and development

Work began in the 1960s with small bilateral programs. In 1972, Sweden put Chile in its cooperation programs. When Allende was overtaken by the military coup d'etat, the programs were canceled and Swedish funds were re-allocated to non-governmental agencies and international institutions. According to Gustafsson and Sjöstedt (in Gajardo, 1994), this also meant expanding its humanitarian aid to other countries of the region. After popular protest and a referendum, democracy was reinstated in 1989 with political elections later that year. During this transition period, several countries showed an interest in cooperating with Chile to consolidate its newly recovered democracy. Sweden finds that a priority area should be programs with underprivileged populations: "to strengthen trust in democracy it is important to achieve short term goals that have a positive effect on the lives of poor people" (Gajardo, 1994, p. 10).

In 1990, Chile had about 5 million people below the poverty line, which represented about one third of the population. The coalition of democratic parties that won the elections had developed a

number of action plans geared towards this sector of society. One of the priority areas was education, which was articulated in the proposal of the *900 Schools Program*. During 1989 and 1990, several Swedish delegations traveled to Chile to discuss in detail the nature of cooperative programs, which at this stage were already defined as educational. The nature of these discussions and the relationship between the agencies of both countries gave the program important characteristics:

> "The open dialogue between ASDI and AGCI (the cooperation agencies of each country) and the institutions responsible for the project as well as the great experience of the executive board, the majority pro- fessionals from Chilean NGO's focused on research and educational development, played a very important role in how assistance was designed. These elements provided Sweden with guarantees of high quality work and allowed it to minimize its participation in the execution of the program" (Gajardo, 1994, p. 10).

> "From the beginning the 900 Schools Program was seen as a model for other regions. The program itself was strategically very important and was very innovative as a rehabilitation effort of socio-economically deprived sectors. On the side of Sweden, it was the first time that a program was undertaken with so little direct participation" (Gajardo, 1994, p. 11).

The *900 Schools Program* was initially aimed at the 900 schools that showed the lowest performance on the national assessment scores obtained by SIMCE (*System of Measurement of the Quality of Education*). These evaluations had begun in 1988 (MEC, 1993) so there were data on all the schools of the country, making the selection of the lowest scoring schools relatively easy. The selected schools, mainly located in socio-economically deprived regions and remote areas of the country, participated in a program focused on:

- Improvement of infrastructures of educational facilities.
- Receipt of school texts, classroom libraries and other pedagogical material.
- In-service professional development for teachers.
- Learning workshops for students with difficulties, directed by counselors from the community.
- Assistance for school directors in the creation of educational improvement programs stemming from the teacher body.
- A pilot project focused on multi-aged classroom schools for rural areas.

The project had a duration of three years, during which Denmark also began to cooperate providing funds for the last two projects discussed above. A total of 1,385 schools, 222,491 students, 7,267 teachers, 2,086 community counselors and 312 technical

supervisors of the program participated in it with results that were largely successful (Gajardo, 1994). From 1988-90 to 1990-92, the proportion of schools that scored above the regional average went from 15.52% to 28.3%, below regional average scores decreased from 16.14% to 13.4% and the proportion of schools that did not improve from year to year decreased from 38.75% to 35.2%. Overall, 64.8% of the schools improved their scores after the program.

In 1993, the *900 Schools Program* and Swedish and Danish cooperation concluded. Since then the program has been absorbed by the MECE program (MEC, 1997) (*Improvement of the Quality and Equity of Education*) of the Chilean Ministry of Education. This program incorporates all of the characteristics of the *900 Schools Program*, expanding it to all public schools of the country and it is projected to move on to middle and secondary education.

C. The Relationship between Private-Public Schools and Educational Rights in Spain

As mentioned above, Spain has a system of public funding for private schools. The development of this type of institution (*concerted schools*) during the democratic transition served to recognize the role of the Catholic Church in Spain, and especially its important role in education (Turner and Goicoa, 1988). Currently 80% of *concerted schools* are run by the Catholic Church, which supposedly allows these centers to continue their work without restricting the scope of their student population. In any case, an important requirement is that these schools participate in all state-run programs regarding education (such as, professional development efforts, mainstreaming programs or compensatory education).

The organization of this type of schooling is intertwined with the vast development that public schooling has experienced in Spain since the early 1980s. In 1982, the Socialist Party became the governing party and maintained its position for the next 13 years. During this period, the policy and educational reforms that characterize the current educational system were undertaken (*Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación*, 1985; *Ley de Organización General del Sistema Educativo*, 1990). Parallel to legislative changes was a significant increase in public spending, reaching 7.8% of the GDP in 1984; these increases were necessary to meet the growth in numbers of students and develop modern infrastructures. After this, spending gains decreased towards the end of the 1980's to the 4-6% range (Turner y Goicoa, 1988; Moltó et al; 1997). In 1996, the Popular Party (of center-right ideology) became the governing party, a change that has had a significant impact on the educational policy developed up to that moment.

The distribution of students within schools has changed dramatically. For example, although at the beginning of the 1970s secondary education was practically monopolized by private schools (Feito, 1991), in the 1997-98 school year 72.2% of students went to public secondary schools and 27.8% studied in private secondary schools (the data from the Spanish Ministry of Education collapses

private and *concerted* schools in the same category). Overall, in the 1997-98 academic year, approximately 70% of all pre- university students attended public schools. However, this redistribution masks important ethnic and class differences in the student body of these schools:

- Approximately 90% of minority and non-EU immigrant students attend public schools (Consejo Escolar-Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture, 1997; Bartolomé, 1997).
- Choosing public or *concerted* schools is a process highly influenced by socio-economic status (Moltó et al.; 1997).

In many respects this evolution and the recent educational policy changes reflect the tensions between two ideological views regarding education. On the one hand, the reforms proposed during the 1980s focused on providing equality of educational opportunity to all students (Marchesi, 1996). On the other hand, current governmental policy favors "freedom of choice" for parents and considers that the allocation of funds should be determined by supply-demand criteria (Díaz, 1997). These trends reflect the opposition between two distinct conceptions of the role of the state in relation to education and schooling that have been present in Spain at least since the democratic transition (Feito, 1991). This discussion between "freedom of choice" (the state as subsidiary) and "equality of opportunity" (public schooling as the principal force) currently constitutes one of the most important debates among educators, parents and educational policy makers in Spain. In many ways, this discussion and the student distributions are not unlike those of other European countries (Ferrandis, 1988).

It is difficult to assess if these movements respond to any "objective" differences in educational quality. However, two research projects in public schools in lower-socio- economic sections of Madrid seem to show that a move to *concerted schools* by many families is caused by a perceptions of lower educational quality and problematic social environment in public schools (Poveda, 1997; Gómez, 1999). Research in other regions of Spain for many years has also highlighted how public and *concerted* schools are divided across ethnic lines, with public schools enrolling the majority of gypsy students and *concerted* schools being conspicuously all-white Spanish (Abajo, 1997; Knipmeyer, 1980)

The differing realities just presented are not susceptible to simple comparative analysis. However, they reflect problems confronting the implementation of children's rights. In the following section, we try to present a number conceptual lines that may help organize some of the general difficulties that emerge when putting these rights into practice.

Discussion and Conclusions

Considering children's rights, in this case as they relate to education, effective practices are a complex matter that is not

automatically guaranteed by making them explicit in a formal document. Rights, as principles that regulate social organization, are intertwined and complicated by the ideological and day-to-day tensions of our current societies. In the case of educational rights it is possible to describe a series of principles that explain why the application of these rights is troublesome. The process can be problematic because:

- **Condition a)** As they have been articulated by different social groups, educational rights can be incompatible with (or in conflict with) each other. Thus, although all groups have a legitimate claim to the rights they demand, the development of these rights by one group implies the withdrawal of other rights in an opposing group.
- **Condition b)** Implementing certain rights implies having a series of material, social and psychological prerequisites necessary to make them effective. These prerequisites, in some cases, can be considered human/children's rights themselves, which often leads to the proposal that human/children's rights are organized in a hierarchical-pyramidal manner (**Condition b1**). In other cases, the determination of prerequisite conditions is the result of some form of "rational analysis" (e.g., scientific research, political discussion), which although an important form of knowledge construction is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty (**Condition b2**).

Furthermore, as pointed out by Verhellen (1994), educational rights can be construed as rights *to* education, rights *in* education and rights *through* education. This organization is very helpful in articulating how educational rights should be effective. However, as we will see below, assigning *a priori* each article of the Convention to the different categories is not as univocal as presented by Verhellen (1994). What is interesting in these two frameworks is that they shed much light on our understanding of the implications of the three nation case studies presented above.

In Spain, it is obvious that different social groups defend each ideological position regarding the basic mechanisms of education. Furthermore, these two groups have polarized their discussion around the development of public or private schooling. Since in the end the discussion is about the allocation of funds and resources, as well as the pedagogical-policy lines that should govern education, it is reasonable to suggest that they stand in opposition as discussed above (**Condition a** above). The argument that defends "freedom of choice," especially as it implies forms of private education, is a claim about a right to education: the right to choose the type of schooling one wants (availability of private institutions) and to guarantee state support of that education, so it is accessible not only to the economically capable (development of *concerted* schools). As such, it is picked-up in art. 29-2 of the Convention, which delineates the rights and responsibilities of private educational institutions. The argument that defends "equality of educational opportunity" is also explicitly stated

as a right in art. 28-1 of the Convention (including basic measures to make it effective). However, although Verhellen considers it a right to education, "equality of educational opportunity" is mainly a right *through* education, especially when presented as an outcome that makes effective equality of social opportunity (Green, 1971), which is how we think it should be construed.

Therefore, we a have a situation of conflicting rights and social groups that make claims on different domains of education. Also, as shown in the data presented above, this double system has created an ethnically and socio-economically segregated student body. One way of assessing this is to see how other educational and children's rights can be developed within an educational system with these characteristics. Segregation, given that the "separate but equal" suggestion has never proven true, hampers many aspects of equality of educational opportunity and may eventually put at serious risk the meritocratic principles by which many attempt to justify social inequalities in Western democratic societies (Rivière, Rivière y Rueda, 1997). Furthermore, preparing children to live peacefully and with tolerance in multicultural societies is a right (art. 29-1d) that is made effective *through* and *in* education and is clearly incompatible with segregation along ethnic and economic lines. Given these considerations, it seems that current policy trends in Spanish education should be critically re-assessed through the lens of children's rights.

Argentina's current educational system faces important financial restrictions that result in limitations of infrastructures and human resources. The outcome is a diminished capacity to undertake its role adequately. Art. 29- 1a of the Convention asserts that education should help to develop children's full capacities: intellectual, physical and personality. It is easy to understand that "on the part of" the child this means that he or she should meet a series of physical and psychological conditions (security, physical well-being and the like) that will allow him/her to cope with the demands of schooling and take advantage of the possibilities it offers. These conditions themselves are considered rights and are explicitly reflected in the Convention (this would be a common example of **Condition b1** above).

"On the part of" the school, it is also possible to speak of necessary circumstances. The institution and people who work in it should also meet a series of conditions so they can face the demands placed on education and the principles reflected in the Convention. As Verhellen (1994) pointed out, educational rights in important aspects are made effective by adults. This obviously refers to parents being able to assert their children's rights; but on the part of the school (and the adults that work in that school), it also signifies having the means to make effective these rights. Providing quality education is something that cannot be met without a firm legislative commitment, proper infrastructures, resources for professional development and positive mid-term and long-term expectations for educators. All these can be considered prerequisites that are part of the child's educational rights (**Condition b1** above) and should be made effective through social and economic policies that guarantee the accomplishment of these goals.

Argentina has made important investments in time, human and economic resources to undertake its educational reform. However, international institutions and expert consultants have apparently not been able to fully understand these efforts. Some of their suggestions have been especially unfortunate because they did not take into account the complex and diverse reality of the country.

Cooperation between Chile, Sweden and Denmark puts into effect art. 28-3 of the Convention and represents one of the most important intervention areas between states with differing economic resources. However, intervention programs rest on a series of important principles that are not easily defined. First, intervention is based on an "assessment of needs," but justifying how, who, what, and why these needs are put forward is not clear-cut. Second, educational cooperation as defined in the Convention (art. 28-3) should be aimed at providing access to "technical knowledge" and "modern educational methods," but explaining exactly what these constitute is again a difficult task. Therefore, making operational proposals constitutes an important part of the elaboration of the program (is a process-result of a "rational analysis", **Condition b2** above).

When considering developing countries or "emergent economies," these questions have often been very controversial and assume a series of characteristics (lack of knowledge and skills or absence of professional staff in the receiving country), that by being absent make the *900 Schools Program* a good model. Cooperation is usually highly asymmetrical with the "target" country playing a minimal role in the intervention process. However, the Chile-Sweden-Denmark experience showed that the "target" country (Chile) was capable of generating useful information for the decision making process, formulating objectives and program frameworks, implementing the program, assessing progress and giving a global appraisal of the intervention. Past theorizing (still proposed today) considered "developing countries" to be helpless, incapable of formulating mid-term and long-term goals for their progress and unable to act on their reality. In contrast to this, the *900 Schools Program* showed that an intervention approach that on the part of the "cooperating" country provides adequate financial resources and shows trust in the professional capacity of the "host" country will produce encouraging results. Carlos Rodríguez (1998) captured this attitude well when stating that "if the poor are given the opportunity and adequate incentives they apply with rationality their resources and progress" (p. 14). Chile's cooperative experience shows how these ideas can be put into practice, even in socio-economic and politically unfavorable conditions.

The data presented here illustrate how children's educa- tional rights travel a long journey from the Convention to national legislation to actual day-to-day practices. We believe that daily practices are what constitute children's rights as real principles by which to measure life standards. However, using this criterion does not relegate the other two dimensions (the Convention and legislation) to an insignificant role. In fact the relationship between these three dimensions is dialectic; this dynamic among them is what legitimizes and delegitimizes real

situations.

The Convention is a statement in many cases too vague to provide univocal suggestions as to what to do in schools. Legislation tries to advance this process and give directives at the national or regional level on how to manage schools. However, writing and implementing legislation is a political process characterized by power and resource struggles between different constituencies. This does not mean that the resulting configuration cannot be assessed, since it is in the light of how it captures children's rights that we can consider it legitimate. Research into these questions, however preliminary, is part of this process.

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